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EDITOR'S LETTER

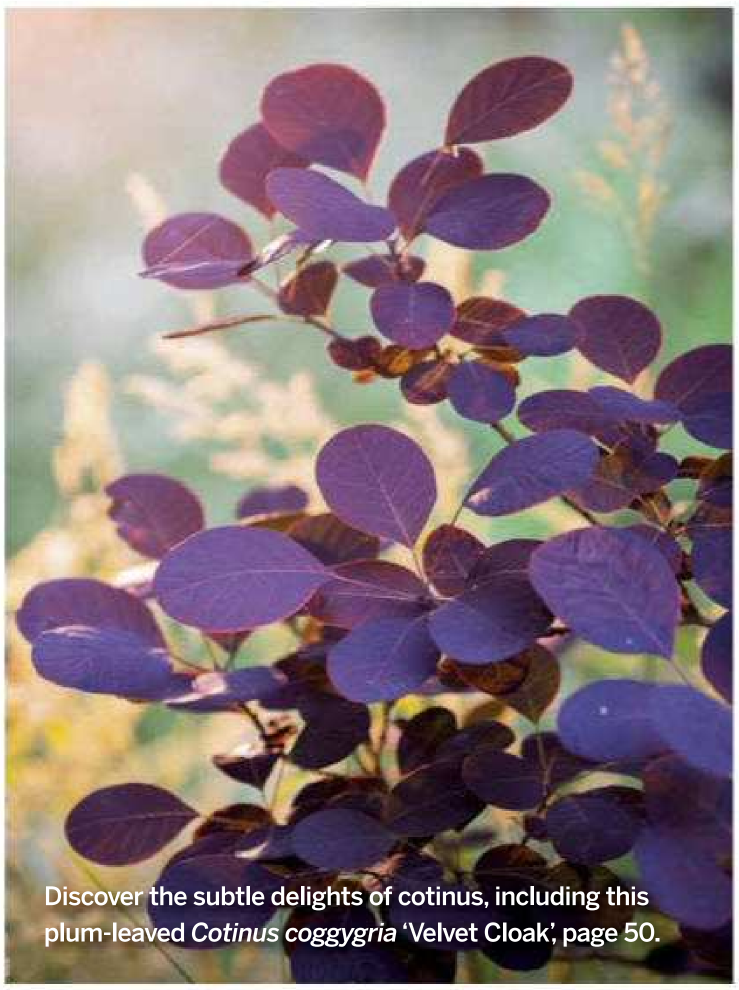
As the editor of *Gardens Illustrated* I often meet and visit the gardens of leading designers and plantspeople; experts who work with plants every day and choose the very best. It's a privilege to hear about the detail of a plant palette from the plantsman who created it, why they selected one cultivar above another and – always – what they plan to plant next. With this in mind, five of Britain's most inspiring designers, including Andy Sturgeon, Jinny Blom and Hugo Bugg, share the spring bulbs that they are planning to plant this autumn. Andy's recommendations include elegant and reliable *Narcissus* 'Thalia', which is good in partial shade and, for a gravel garden, the sea squill, *Drimia maritima.* It is one of several selections for dry planting and a move towards more spacious schemes that celebrate the architecture of the flower. Jinny's selection takes into account bold colour and the challenges of using it, considering the tricky question of how to use bright and blocky *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Woodstock' outside. Double tulips appear in several of the designers' lists, a notable rise in the interest in blousier flowers. Perhaps this is a result of new cultivars or their suitability for cutting. You'll want to have a pencil and notebook to hand.

Increasingly gardeners are recognising shrubs as beautiful in their own right and not simply a foil for other plants. In the Plant Profile this month, writer Andy McIndoe describes 13 of the best cotinus. Known as the smoke bush because of their hazy summer inflorescence (the flowers looks like puff of smoke), cotinus have year-round colour and wonderful autumn tints. Typically thought of in tones of plum and red, the green cultivars excel when it comes to late colour.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



RICHARD BLOOM

Discover the subtle delights of cotinus, including this plum-leaved *Cotinus coggygria* 'Velvet Cloak', page 50.

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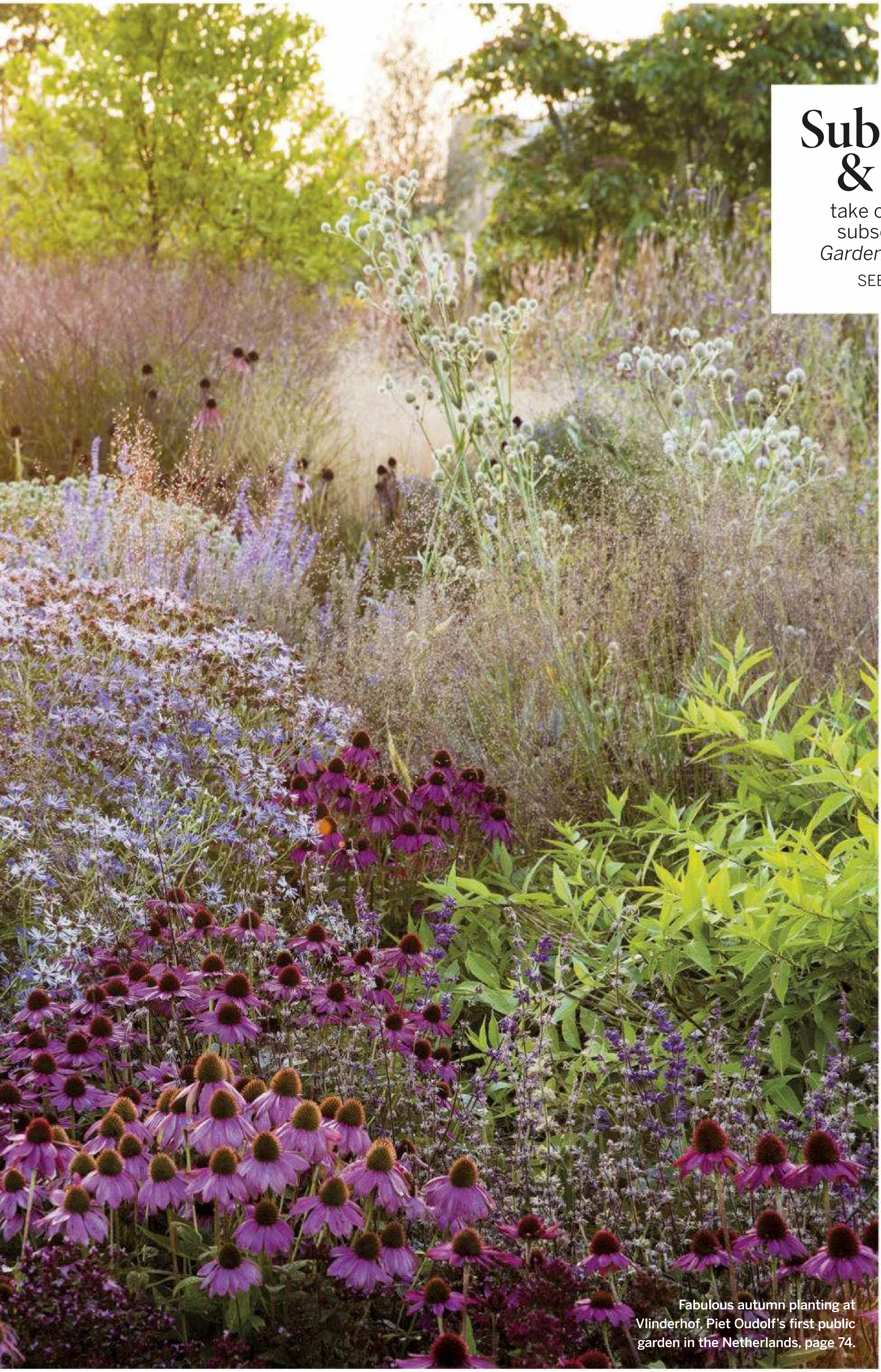
CLAIRE TAKACS



Fabulous autumn planting at Vlinderhof, Piet Oudolf's first public garden in the Netherlands, page 74.

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COVER IMAGE

Symphyotrichum 'Little Carlow' at Folly Farm by Jason Ingram

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CRISTIAN BARNETT
Cristian photographs artist Jane Bevan, page 70. *"Jane's entire process, from foraging to creating, was a joy to record. She has a real affinity with the raw elements of her work."*

SANAE SUGIMOTO
Sanae illustrates Frank Ronan's column this month, page 114. *"I love English gardens and culture and am honoured to be drawing for* Gardens Illustrated *from Japan."*

NOEL KINGSBURY
Noel visits a meadow garden created by Larry Weaner, page 34. *"Larry has an innovative approach to design-led wildflower planting, shown here on a grand scale."*

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JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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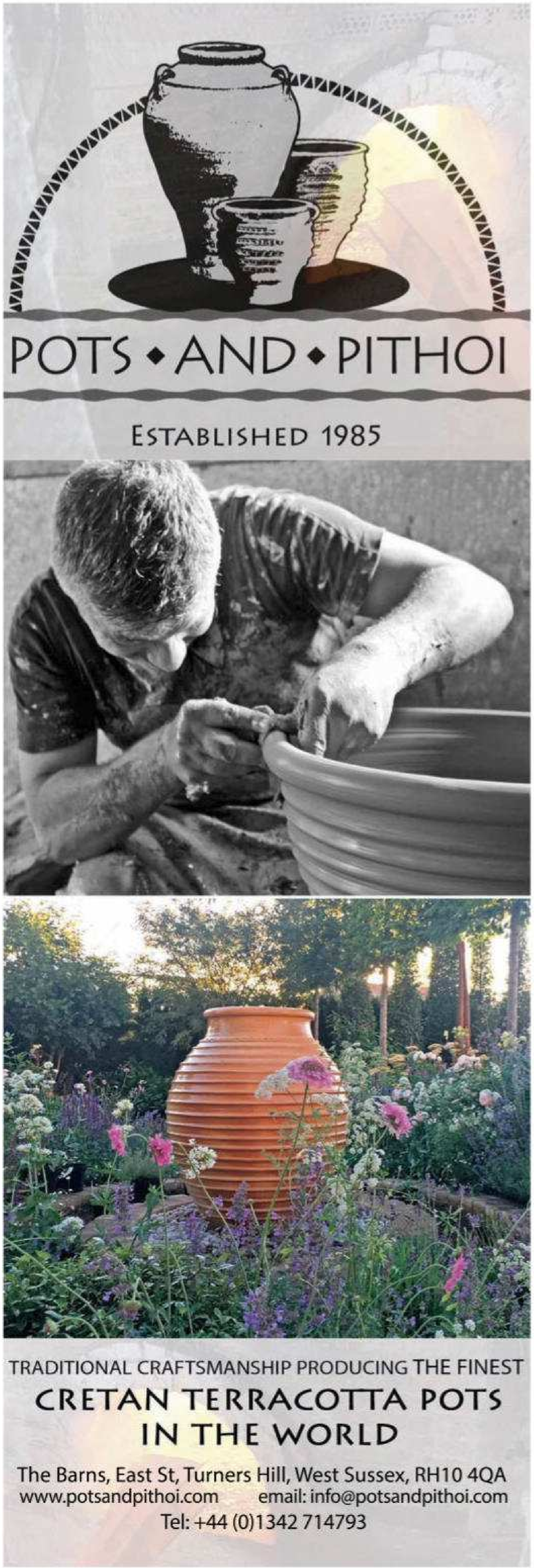

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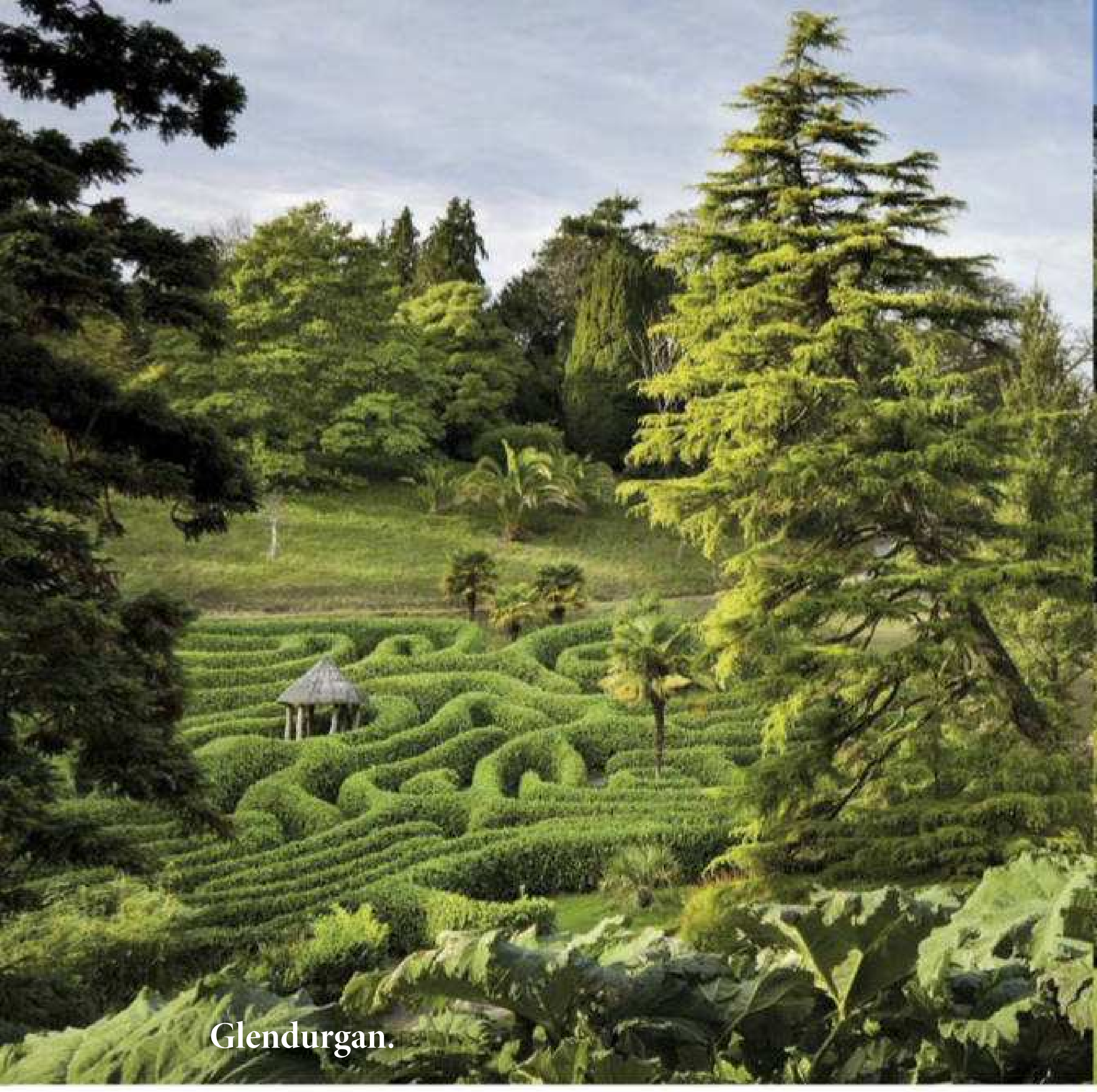

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TOUR LEADER
Annie Guilfoyle is a regular *Gardens Illustrated* contributor, and an award-winning designer, writer, lecturer and international garden show judge. She will be accompanied by expert garden tour leader, Dr Sophie Piebenga.

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The Cornish peninsula is famous for its sheltered gardens harbouring important collections of magnolias, camellias, rhododendrons, palms, tree ferns and many other exotic plant groups that predominantly flower in the spring. Most of these gardens are found on the south coast where valley gardens lead down to secluded creeks warmed by the Gulf Stream to give unique microclimates. Our four-day tour allows you to discover the magnificence of some of Cornwall's finest gardens including **Tregrehan**, **Caerhays**, **Trewithen** and **Tregothnan**. We'll also be joined for a day by garden designer **Charles Fox** whose influential shipping merchant family was responsible for the creation in the 19th century of the gardens at **Glendurgan**, **Penjerrick** and **Trebah**, and he'll talk about the gardens' fascinating histories over lunch at Glendurgan. We'll stay at Olga Polizzi's boutique **Tresanton Hotel**, a haven of peace and beauty where guests enjoy comfort and style, fresh local cuisine and traditional, unobtrusive service. All rooms have stunning views across the sea towards St Anthony's Lighthouse with the opportunity to stroll into St Mawes, one of Cornwall's prettiest fishing villages.

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Price includes: three nights dinner, bed and breakfast at Tresanton Hotel, St Mawes; three delicious evening meals with wines at the hotel; three lunches, including a special invitation to lunch at Glendurgan with Charles Fox; and all transportation from St Austell railway station or the hotel. The price does not include hotel extras or travel insurance.

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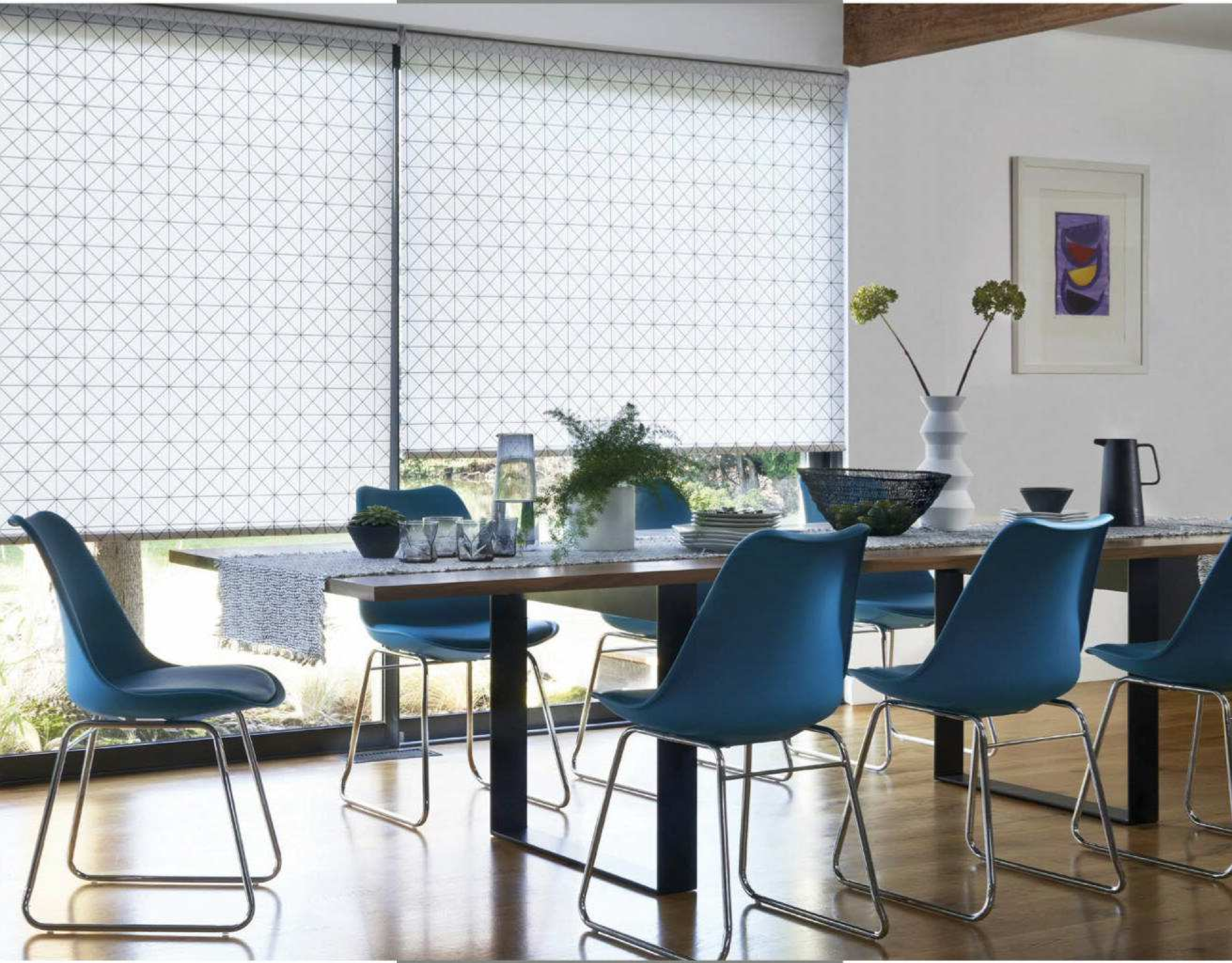

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DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

GET AHEAD FOR CHRISTMAS

Next month the Garden Museum in London hosts the Beautiful & Useful one-day craft fair offering gorgeous gift ideas from some of Britain's best designer-makers in the fields of ceramics, wood, willow, metalwork and more. Browse Clara Castner's delicate porcelain vases alongside wooden spoons and chopping boards from Grain & Knot, and concrete pots and planters with provenance from Peckham makers From the Land. The Garden Café will also be open for refreshments and lunch, making this a really enjoyable early Christmas shopping day out. 18 November, 10.30am-5pm. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

• Tickets for the event cost £5, which includes entrance to the museum's collections (normally £10), but *Gardens Illustrated* readers can buy tickets at the discounted price of £4. Simply enter the code 'GM20' when booking online.

News

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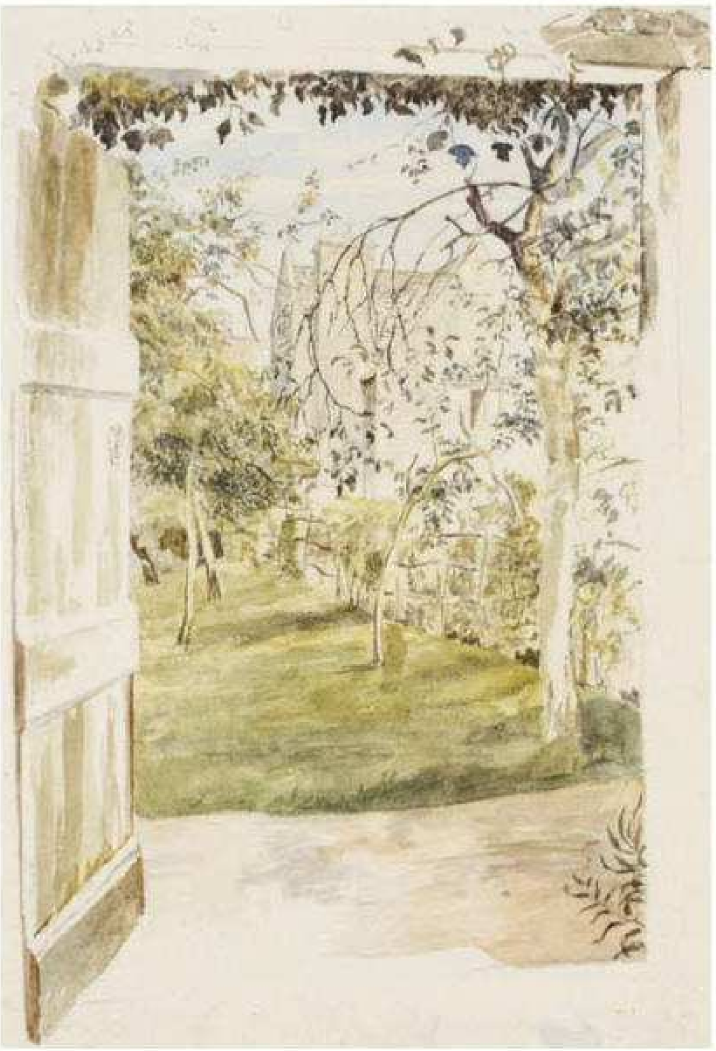
CORE VALUES

Discover hundreds of heritage apple cultivars at the Brogdale National Apple Festival in Faversham. The two-day celebration of all things apple is an opportunity to sample and buy a host of different apples and explore Brogdale's National Fruit Collection – a living museum that protects more than 2,200 different types of apple and 550 types of pear. As well as tastings, there will be talks on apple history and cultivation, cooking demonstrations and the chance to sample a range of local ciders made with fruit from the collection. You'll also find plenty of children's activities, music and food stalls, alongside a range of stalls offering rural crafts and produce, including homemade preserves. 13-14 October, £7.20. brogdalecollections.org



MAY MORRIS, *VIEW OF KELMSCOTT MANOR FROM THE OLD BARN*, 1880S © WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY

THE MAGIC OF MORRIS

William Morris did much to introduce the beauty of nature into Victorian homes, and was a key figure in popularising Arts and Crafts gardens among the artistic middle classes. A new exhibition at Walthamstow's William Morris Gallery explores the many ways in which Morris and other artists have been inspired by gardens around them. *The Enchanted Garden* includes paintings from artists such as Vanessa Bell and Stanley Spencer, alongside works by Morris and his Pre-Raphaelite contemporaries. You'll also find original designs for Morris's *Trellis* wallpaper, inspired by the rose trellises in his garden at Red House, as well as an intimate portrait of Morris's gardens at Kelmscott Manor (left), by his daughter May. 20 October – January 2019. Admission free. **wmgallery.org.uk**

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Watering can specialist Haws has added six new styles to its range, including the gun metal and copper pot waterer, priced at £28, to make the task of keeping plants happy and healthy just that little bit more stylish. **haws.co.uk**

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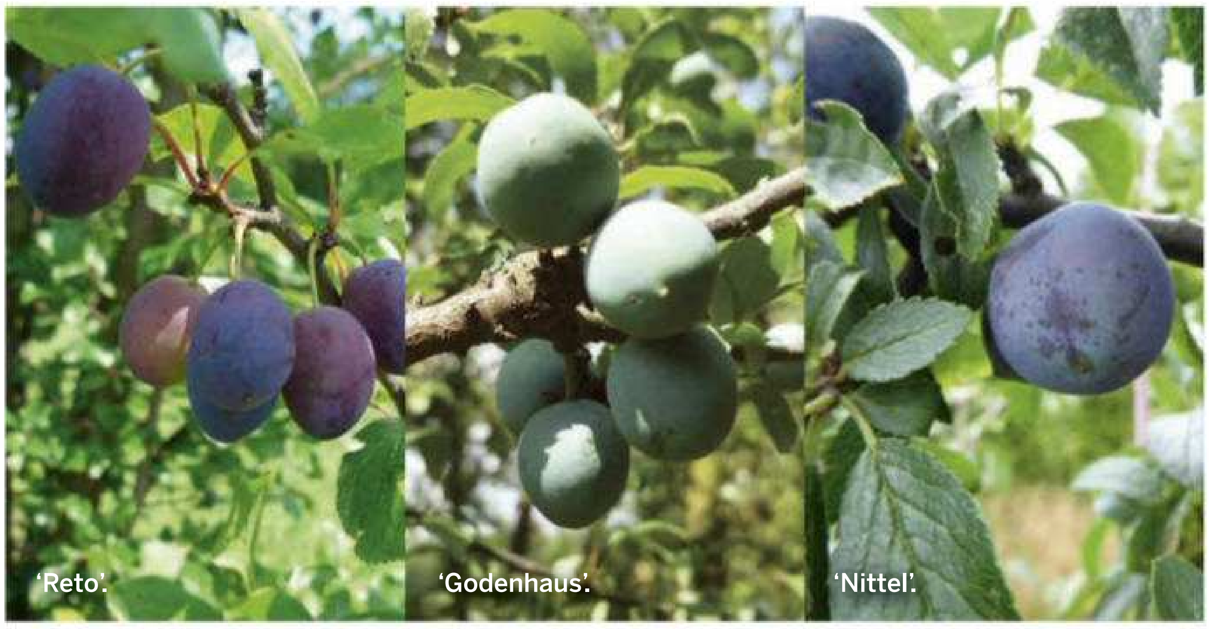
NEW BEGINNINGS

The exciting New American Garden at the American Museum in Britain has opened with landscaping and planting that offers an insight into the flora and fauna of the USA. The first European commission for the renowned American landscape architecture practice Oehme, Van Sweden, it features more than 12,000 newly planted plants, including *Gaura lindheimeri* 'Summer Breeze' and *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' arranged in OvS's bold and naturalistic swathes of planting. A series of American-themed areas will contain native American trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs, as well as a rose garden with American native pioneer roses. Based near Bath, this is the only museum of American decorative and folk art outside the USA. **americanmuseum.org**



'Reto'. 'Godenhaus'. 'Nittel'.

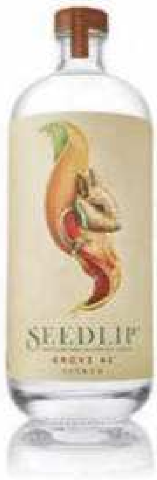
FRUITS OF YOUR LABOUR

At this time of year British hedgerows are full of wild fruits ready to be turned into jams, jellies and, of course, delicious sloe gin. But if the long thorns of *Prunus spinosa*, or blackthorn bush, on which sloes grow, have put you off foraging for them, online fruit specialist Lubera has three new blackthorn cultivars with fewer thorns and larger fruits than their wild cousins. Blackthorn 'Reto' can be harvested in September and October before the first frost, which most sloes need to become less bitter, while 'Godenhaus' and 'Nittel' benefit from a later harvest. All are priced at £32.40 for a 10L pot. **lubera.co.uk**

Mix it up this autumn.

AUTUMN SPICE

Did you know that the word 'orange' wasn't used to describe the colour as well as the fruit until 1542? That year has now inspired the name of a new spicy orange-flavoured spirit, Grove 42, from non-alcoholic spirit maker Seedlip. A blend of mandarin, bitter orange and blood orange with ginger, lemongrass and lemon, it's perfect for autumn evenings. Mix it with soda water and a twist of orange, or with ginger ale over ice and a slice of fresh ginger. It costs £27·99 for a 70cl bottle. **seedlipdrinks.com**



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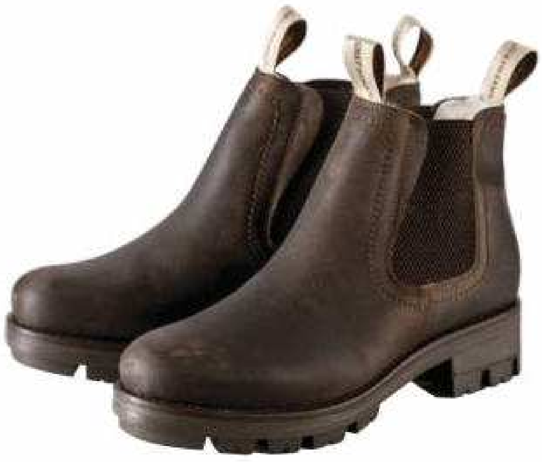

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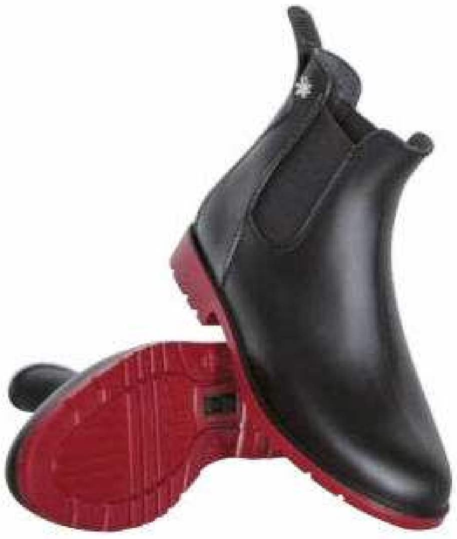

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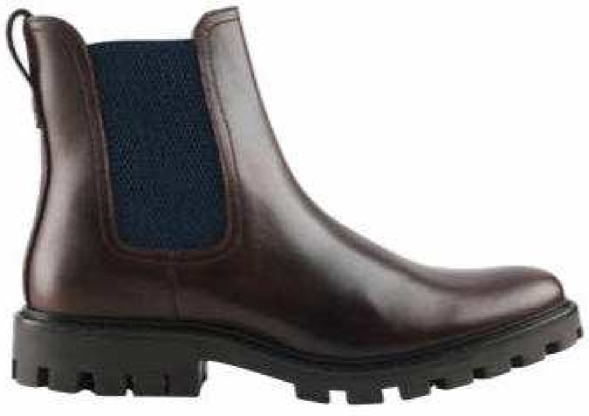

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DIARY

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❶ **Chatsworth Outdoors**
Don't miss a new outdoor sculpture exhibition in the grounds of Chatsworth House, featuring a new installation by Chatsworth's current artist-in-residence, Linder Sterling, and works by more than 20 artists, including Antony Gormley, Dame Elisabeth Frink and Allen Jones (shown). Until 9 November, admission included in garden entry (£13). Chatsworth House, Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1PP. chatsworth.org

❷ **Autumn Colour at Hever Castle**
Enjoy glorious displays of autumn colour at Hever Castle in Kent, including the rich foliage of beech, liquidambars, tulip trees and Japanese maples. 1-28 October, from £13.70. Hever Castle & Gardens, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG. Tel 01732 865224, hevercastle.co.uk

❸ **Cheltenham Literature Festival**
Among the horticultural highlights at this year's festival are Monty Don and Derry Moore discussing the delights of Islamic paradise gardens, and tips on how to make the most of your garden from Nick Bailey and designer Jo Thompson. 5-14 October. Various venues. cheltenhamfestivals.com

❹ **Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair**
Browse specialist nurseries from across Europe, including Beth Chatto Gardens, Phoenix Perennial Plants, Special Plants, and Tuingold Foltz and De Hessenhof nurseries from the Netherlands. 6-7 October, 11am-4pm, admission included in garden entry (£9.50). Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 254048, greatdixter.co.uk

❺ **Radcot House Open Day**
Take the opportunity to explore this fascinating garden that features a Walled Garden with exotic planting, the tranquil Long Pond garden, and which makes generous use of grasses and perennials. 7 October, 2-6pm, £5 for NGS. Radcot House, Radcot, Oxfordshire OX18 2SX. Tel 01367 810231, ngs.org.uk

❻ **Brompton Cemetery Tour**
Join a guided tree tour of London's historic 39-acre Brompton Cemetery with aboricultural assistant, Greg Packman. The tour is also a chance to see the Grade I-listed burial ground following its recent £6.2 million restoration. 13 October, 2.30pm (at the Meeting Place at North Lodge), suggested donation £5. Brompton Cemetery, Brompton Road, London SW10 9UG. Tel 020 7352 1201, brompton-cemetery.org.uk

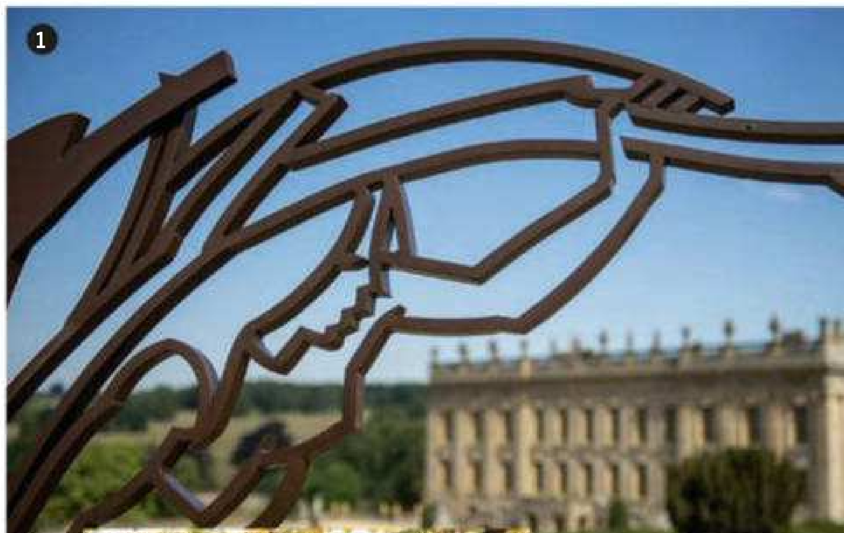
❼ **Autumn Extravaganza at Great Comp**
Explore the seven-acre gardens of Great Comp in Kent at the height of autumn. Alongside garden exhibitors will be local artisan food producers and craft makers. 13-14 October, 11am-5pm, admission included in garden entry (£8). Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane, Platt, nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS. Tel 01732 885094, greatcompgarden.co.uk

❽ **Mushroom Walks**
Discover some fascinating facts about mushrooms and toadstools on this guided tour of Arley Hall, home to 196 types of multi-coloured fungi. 14 October, 11am and 2pm, £8. Garden entry £8.50. Arley Hall and Gardens, Arley, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6NA. Tel 01565 777353, arleyhallandgardens.com

❾ **Vegetable Growing Masterclass**
Find out more about autumn jobs in the veg patch, including soil preparation and winter crop sowing, on this one-day masterclass with Tom Brown, head gardener at Parham House. 20 October, 9am-5pm, £145. West Dean College, West Dean, nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 01243 818300, westdean.org.uk

❿ **Willow Sculpture**
Learn how to design and create a small sculpture out of willow on this one-day course. 20 October, 10.30am-4.30pm, £35, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Middleton Hall, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HN. Tel 01558 667150, botanicgarden.wales

⓫ **SGD Autumn Conference**
Book now for the Society of Garden Designers' autumn conference. This year's theme is *GEOMETRY: New Angles on Gardens and Landscape* and speakers include Christopher Bradley-Hole, Kate Cullity, Ian Kitson and Cristina Mazzucchelli. 17 November, 9.50am-5.15pm, early bird tickets until 22 October, from £77. Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Tel 0115 968 3188, sgd.org.uk



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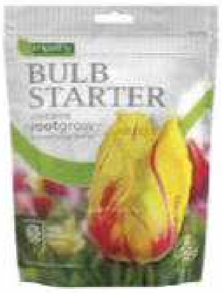

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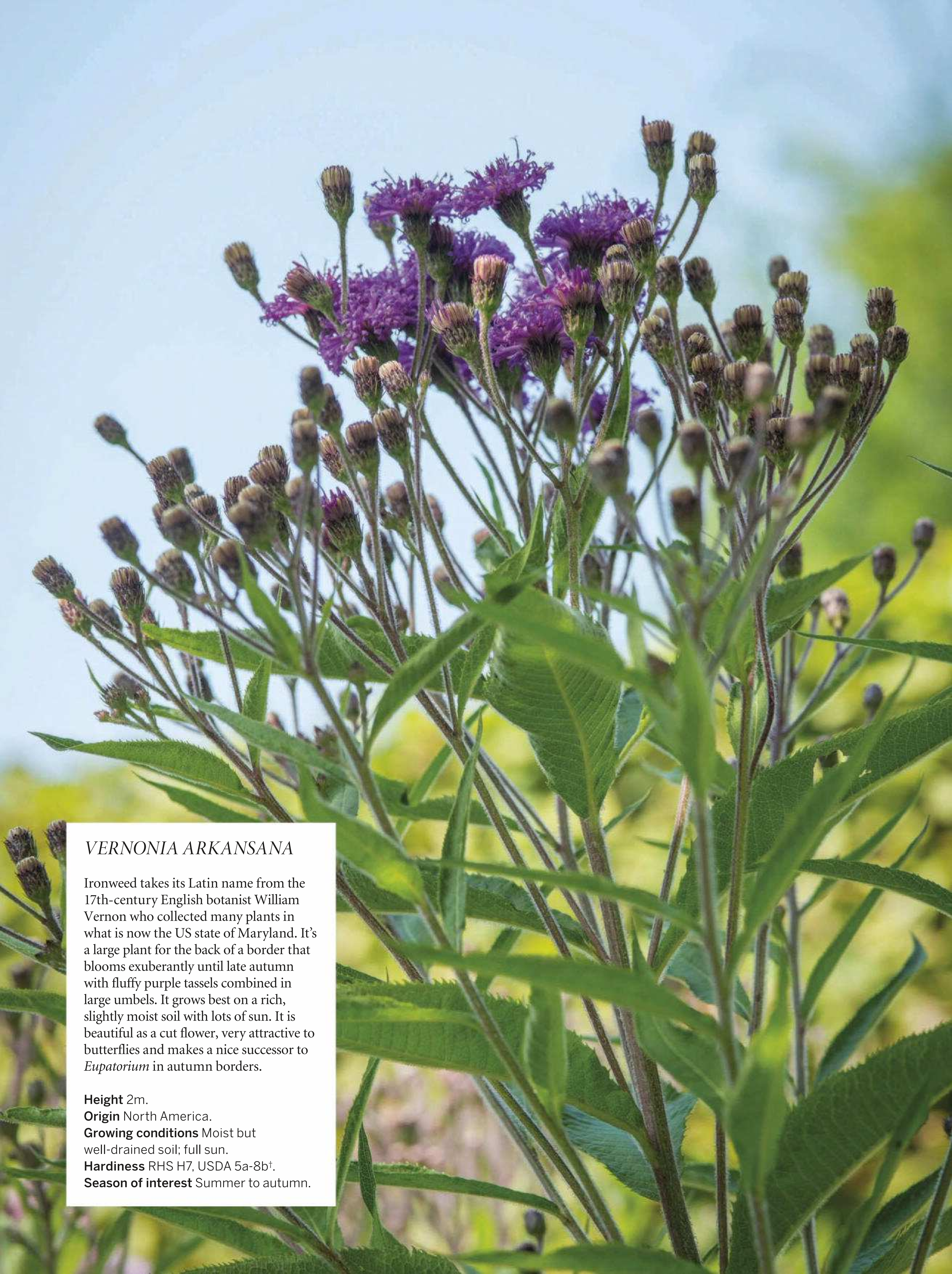


VERNONIA ARKANSANA

Ironweed takes its Latin name from the 17th-century English botanist William Vernon who collected many plants in what is now the US state of Maryland. It's a large plant for the back of a border that blooms exuberantly until late autumn with fluffy purple tassels combined in large umbels. It grows best on a rich, slightly moist soil with lots of sun. It is beautiful as a cut flower, very attractive to butterflies and makes a nice successor to *Eupatorium* in autumn borders.

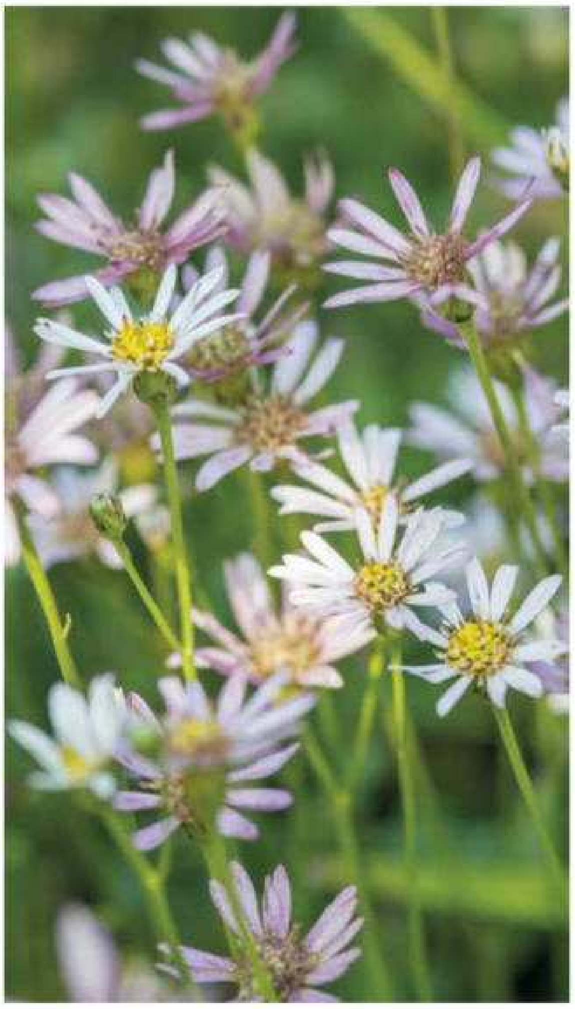
Height 2m.
Origin North America.
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b[†].
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

OCTOBER PLANTS

A rich palette comes to the fore in Fleur's recommendations for early autumn, including a perennial sunflower and a bi-coloured bidens

WORDS FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER

Fleur van Zonneveld runs the Dutch nursery De Kleine Plantage.
dekleineplantage.nl



ASTER RUGULOSUS 'ASRUGO'

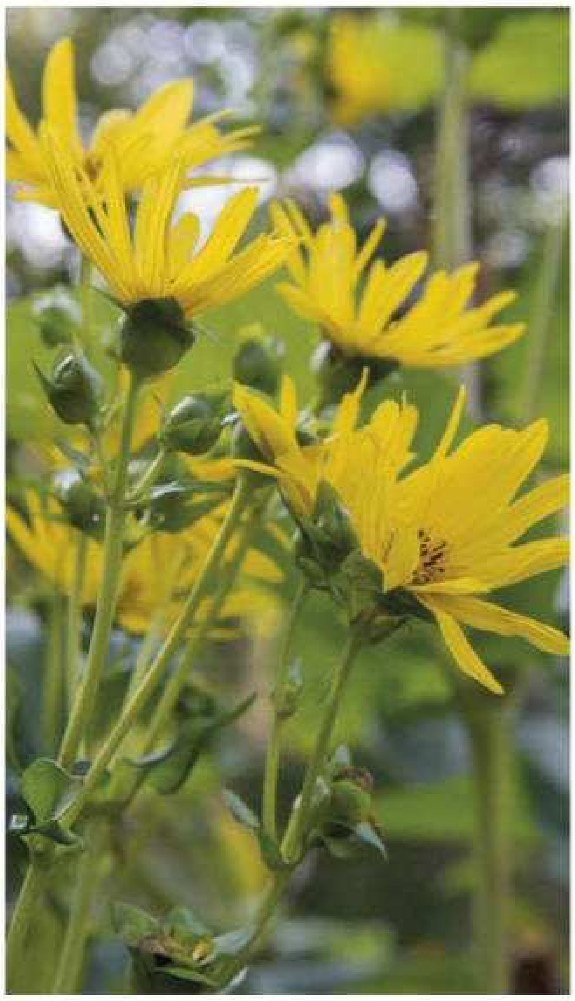
A beautiful and hassle-free aster that flowers abundantly and for several months. It doesn't proliferate and doesn't suffer from mildew. Over time it changes colour from white to dusty pink, making it perfect to combine with other perennials in the pink and burgundy colour spectrum, such as *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Fan Scharlach', *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Blackfield' or *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Tanna'. Its somewhat looser inflorescences make it ideal for more naturalistic planting schemes.

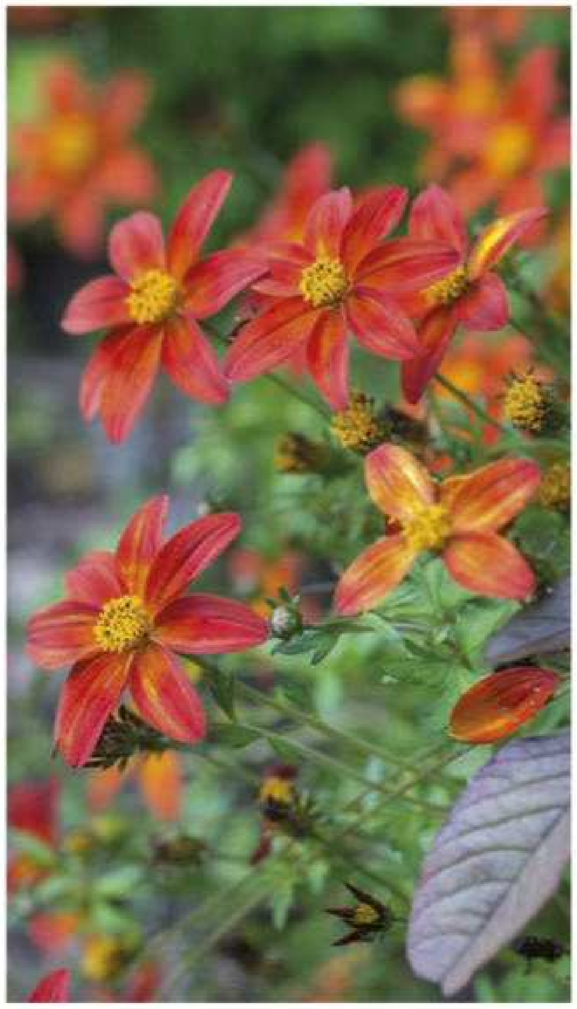
Height 70cm.
Origin Garden origin (species Japan, eastern Asia).
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

SILPHIUM PERFOLIATUM

Commonly known as the cup plant, for its cup-shaped leaves, this tall plant is often used in meadow plantings and among tall prairie grasses, but can also look striking at the back of a border. Some find its height, spread and large leaves a little intrusive, but this seems insignificant compared to the radiant, yellow daisies – sometimes with up to 20 flowers on one four-angled stem – that are held high above the leaves. There are 12 known species of *Silphium*, including a very beautiful, shorter plant we once saw at Great Dixter with greyish leaves.

Height 2.5m.
Origin Central and eastern North America.
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.
Season of interest Autumn.





BIDENS CAMPFIRE 'FIRE WHEEL'

In recent years there have been several new developments in the orange, red colour range of *Bidens*, including the Campfire series, which make an excellent addition to any richly hued border. This one blooms – in abundance – until late in autumn and has beautiful reddish-brown flowers with a striking golden ring in the middle. As the plants fan out broadly and have such a long flowering period, they make excellent fillers and are also ideal for weaving in among other plants at the front edge of the border or in pots. Not hardy.

Height 40cm.
Origin Garden origin (species Mexico).
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; full sun and part shade.
Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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IMPATIENS PSEUDOVIOLA

This small impatiens is a big favourite. Although not hardy, provided winter temperatures remain above freezing it will continuously bloom from summer through to winter, and in warmer climates can bloom all year, producing an abundance of white-pink, violet-like flowers, hence the name *pseudoviola*. An excellent plant for pots, it also works well as a bedding plant in moist and shady places. In our northern garden it is quite difficult to get this balsam through the winter, so we always take cuttings in the autumn, which, as with most impatiens species, is quite easy. AGM*.

Height 40cm.
Origin Kenya, Tanzania.
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
Season of interest Summer to winter.

HELIANTHUS 'TRIOMPHE DE GAND'

In the Netherlands annual sunflowers are very much in vogue at the moment. However, there are also several perennial helianthus worth looking at, including this lovely cultivar developed in Gent in Belgium. Its large, lemon-yellow flowers are around 15cm in diameter and have a heart of dark, slightly ochre-coloured, disc-shaped florets. If you regularly remove the spent flowers, it will continue to bring a sunny, golden glow to the garden until late in the autumn.

Height 1.8m.
Origin Garden origin (species North America).
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Late summer to autumn.

ARALIA CACHEMIRICA

Also known as the Kashmir spikenard, this giant of a plant makes a wonderful architectural statement. In summer it produces large clusters of cream-green rounded umbels that can illuminate the shadiest of spots. Then in autumn its brown-black berries give it a slight air of mystery. Most bizarrely it dies completely above the ground and rises in full glory the following season. Other species in the genus – *Aralia californica* and *Aralia continentalis* – are also voluminous while *Aralia racemosa* and *Aralia cordata* remain much smaller. All are very special.

Height 2.5m.
Origin Asia, from Kashmir to Nepal.
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

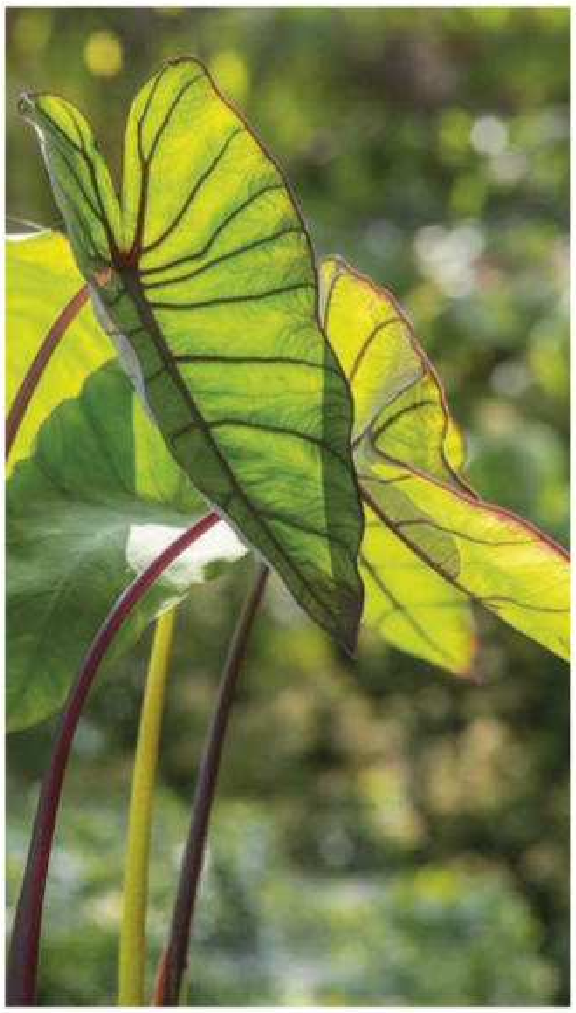
PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best both in Europe and the UK

If you love maples then you'll love **Plantentuin Esveld**. The Dutch nursery has its own Aceretum devoted to an extensive collection of more than 1,000 different maples, consisting of almost all hardy species and a wide range of cultivars. I always enjoy visiting in May and June, when the young leaves develop, but the trees are spectacular in autumn when the flaming colours give a wonderful display. Alongside the acers the nursery also has collections of *Buxus*, *Pieris* and *Lonicera*. Rijneveld 72, 2771XS Boskoop, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)172 213289, esveld.nl

Dutch designer Lianne Pot has created a colourful and vibrant prairie garden that is far more than just a show garden for the many grasses she sells at **Lianne's Siergrassen**. The 3,500 square metre-garden has been laid out in the shape of an oak leaf, with many different North American grasses and perennials, including *Echinacea purpurea*, *Monarda fistulosa* and *Liatris spicata*, grouped by height and structure as much as colour. A delight to explore in early autumn. Jan Gosseswijk 31, 9367 TE, De Wilp, Groningen, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)594 644263, siergras.nl

Of the many lovely gardens we visited on our most recent trip to the UK, we were probably most impressed by the gardens at **Gravetye Manor**, originally designed by the renowned gardener and botanist William Robinson. The house is now a hotel ▷



COLOCASIA ESCULENTA 'BLUE HAWAII'

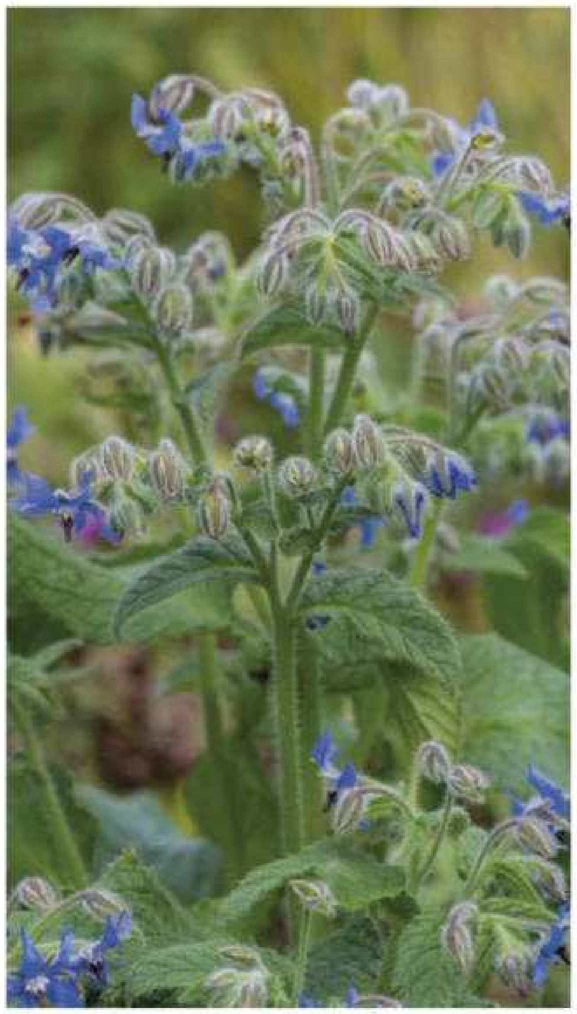
Non-hardy colocasias have become extremely popular as architectural garden plants, possibly because there are so many beautiful examples to be found in exotic gardens. *Colocasia* is an extensive tropical genus with both valuable ornamental garden plants and edible plants. The cultivar 'Blue Hawaii' has beautiful dark reddish-brown veins in the leaves. It is especially spectacular with backlighting. The arrow-shaped leaves can grow up to 60cm. It is also a very useful plant for the edge of container displays.

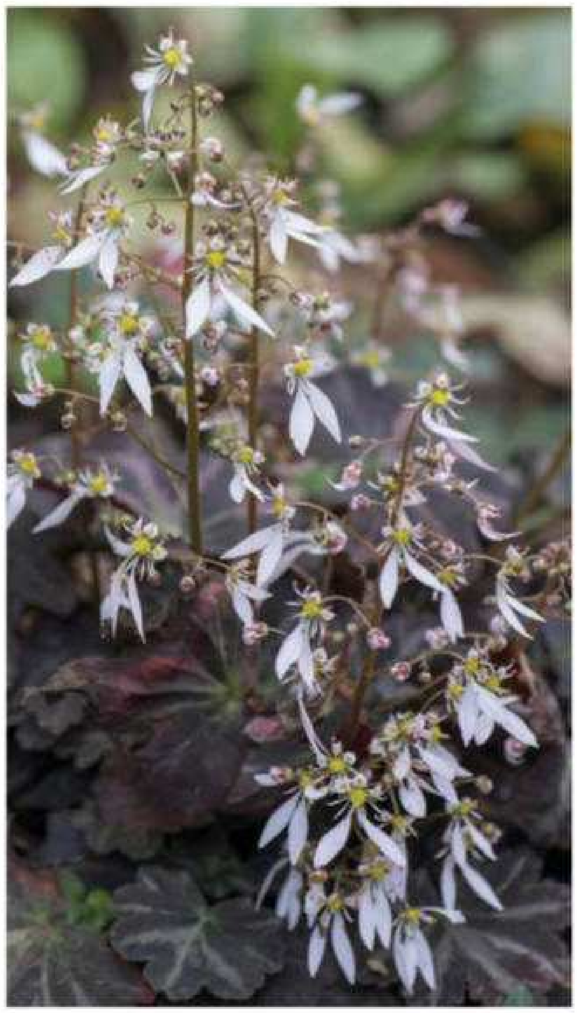
Height 80cm.
Origin Garden origin (species southern India southeast Asia).
Growing conditions Moist soil; full sun to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

BORAGO OFFICINALIS

Borage is one of what are known as pioneer plants, those hardy species that are the first to colonise previously damaged ecosystems. It's an annual plant found in many parts of Europe often growing along grass verges and below bushes, with leaves and stems that are covered with a woolly layer. It sows easily, naturalises well, is beloved by bees and quite simply makes the heart soar just to look at it. In spring we often make a delicious, dark-green borage soup, garnished with its blue flowers as festive decoration. It is also used as a herbal remedy for several disorders.

Height 70cm.
Origin Europe.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 2a-11.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.





SAXIFRAGA 'SILVER VELVET'

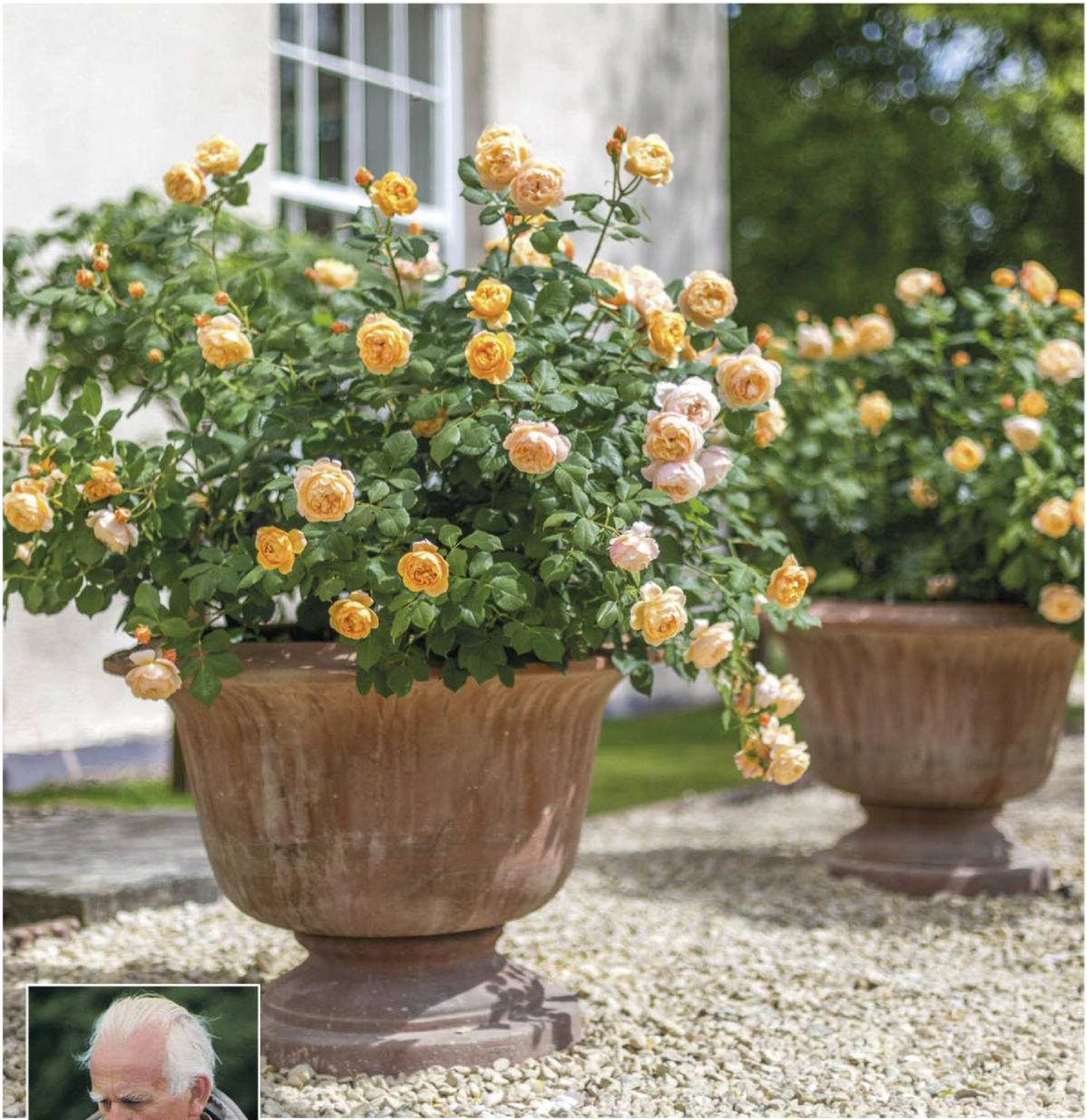
With its velvet red leaves decorated with a silver stripe, this saxifraga is one of the most beautiful, looking at first sight very similar to a *Begonia rex*. Its leaves look so soft and beautiful you may feel tempted to lay your head down on this attractive pillow, but if you did you would only destroy the exuberant fairy-like white pinkish blooms that rise above the foliage. It is a slow grower that seems happy in our clay soil, but prefers a soil that is slightly more acidic. Try it in a pot on a shaded table.

Height 40cm.
Origin Hybrid of garden origin (species Asia).
Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Spring to autumn.

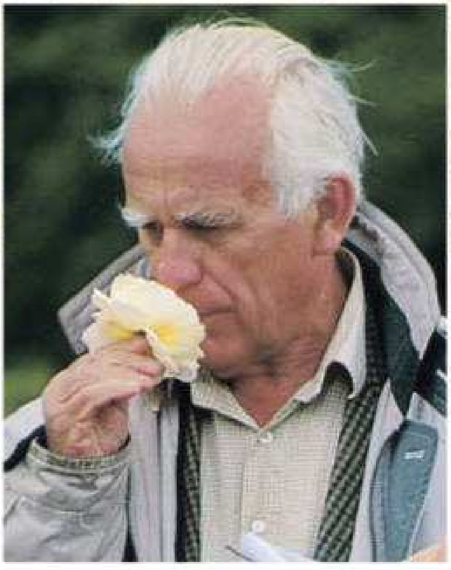
▷ and restaurant and the gardens, under the care of head gardener Tom Coward, who spent three years working with Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter, are a model of considered planting with a fine touch in colour combinations. It's a garden of tranquillity and aesthetics. The completely walled kitchen garden, which furnishes the hotel's restaurant, is especially impressive in October with fruit espaliers, glorious veg and fully flowering annuals. Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ. Tel 01342 810567, gravetyemanor.co.uk

The Salutation in Kent is another hotel and restaurant with an impressive garden pedigree. Designed in 1912 by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, the gardens are a plant lover's paradise, divided into different areas arranged around a unifying theme. We visited in October 2017 and found the gardens both surprising and inspiring, and were impressed by the Exotic Garden with plants that are not at all hardy in the Netherlands, but here grow into a jungle. October also offers the chance to see its dahlia collection. Knightrider Street, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9EW. Tel 01304 619919, the-salutation.com

If asters rather than dahlias are your October plants of choice, there is no better place in the UK to see them at their best than the **Picton Garden** near Malvern. The garden, named in memory of the late Percy Picton, is attached to Old Court Nurseries, which Percy ran for many years and holds the National Plant Collection of Michaelmas daisies. Over the past few years, the garden has been reworked to offer spring and summer interest but is still best seen in autumn. It is open on selected dates throughout the year and every day from 1 September to 20 October. Walwyn Road, Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE. Tel 01684 540416, autumnasters.co.uk



Roald Dahl *(Ausowlish)*



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The Outsider

A trip to Japan sees horticulturist Hannah Gardner venturing north into the mountainous volcanic hinterland of Hokkaido island where alpine plants grow at lower altitudes than further south

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

The Japanese have always treated plants with special reverence, whether artistic, religious or horticultural. This can be observed in the many extraordinary Japanese gardens that seek to encapsulate the very essence of nature. After living in Tokyo as a student, I wanted to escape the intensity of the city and explore the pristine wilderness for myself. While it's fun to welcome the cherry blossom of spring among the picnicking *hanami* crowds, autumn surely calls for solitude and adventure. Remote natural mountainside *onsen*, or hot springs, were the best discovery of my long hikes.

The island of Hokkaido is the northernmost landmass of the Japanese archipelago. The mountains here are almost all of volcanic origin, including several active volcanoes within Daisetsuzan National Park that belch chalky yellow clouds of sulphur as you pass by. Alpine plants are found here at a latitude of around 43 degrees.

Inspiration for the trip

On my first visit, I studied field botany at the University of Hokkaido and enjoyed the University Botanical Garden in the capital, Sapporo. Its living collections focus on the alpine and cool temperate plants of Hokkaido and are a great introduction to the island's flora. There are many landscape highlights here. Tokachi Millennium Forest is a project of breathtaking beauty, with award-winning gardens from Dan Pearson Studio and an extensive Forest Garden by Takano Landscape Planning. Moerenuma Park in Sapporo is also unmissable. Conceived by sculptor Isamu Noguchi as 'the whole being a single sculpture', it is a dramatic contemporary fusion of nature and art.

When to go

Winter is the dominant season in Hokkaido but is preceded by spectacular autumn shades. The alpine zone is the first to colour in mid-September. In the low foothills, broad horizons are streaked with the fiery hues of mixed woodland that features *Magnolia obovata*, acers, *Betula* and *Larix*, species notable for dramatic autumn foliage that persists until mid-/late October. Winter then closes in with temperatures of -25°C and heavy snowfall.

Where to go

There is a great six-hour circuit at Niseko that takes in the cool, temperate, wooded mountains and lakes of several extinct volcanoes, all over 1,000m. The hike begins in the botanically rich area of Ohanabatake, which teams with irises, *Viola brevistipulata* var. *laciniata* and primulas in summer. I have also found modest swathes of the beguiling Japanese wood poppy (*Glaucidium palmatum*) here.

It is worth venturing further north into the main Daisetsuzan volcanic group and diverse Mount Tomuraushi area. Both lie within the national park and can be traversed in five days. Here the montane belt of mainly deciduous trees extends to about 900m. The moist, humid woods are full of bamboo, ferns, sedges, *Veratrum* and the giant, autumn-flowering *Filipendula camtschatica*. The stately leathery foliage of the cream-flowered *Lysichiton camtschatcensis* emerges from damp bogland. *Hydrangea petiolaris* clambers high into the trees, and at the woodland edges colonies of the floriferous *Cardiocrinum cordatum* var. *glehnii* are almost as majestic when in seed.

As you ascend, you enter a coniferous subalpine zone of towering Sakhalin fir (*Abies sachalinensis*), Yezo spruce (*Picea jezoensis*) and heavy-limbed, peeling *Betula ermanii*, a sturdy alpine form. Beyond 1,500m are thickets of wind-pruned *Prunus nipponica* and prostrate *Pinus pumila*. You may even see the distinctive Japanese waxwing, feasting on the bright berries of the mountain ash.

There are vast open areas of scrub, wildflowers and the shimmering silver plumes of *Miscanthus sinensis*. Wandering across a low crimson carpet of Urashima azaleas (*Kalmia procumbens*) and shrubby Aleutian avens (*Sieversia pentapetala*), you keep gaining height. Once above 1,800m the scree is bare, but the views are sublime.

Plants to grow at home

Featuring as one of the seven representative flowers of autumn in verses from the *Man'yōshū* (historical Japanese poetry), golden valerian (*Patrinia scabiosifolia*) deserves to be more widely grown. It is celebrated in Japan for its cultural heritage and dainty, vivid autumn flowers. A hardy native, it grows at low elevation in grassy mountain habitats of Hokkaido. An unassuming, clump-forming perennial with bright-green foliage, it provides good groundcover and thrives in a sunny open position or cool part-shade in well-drained soil. Long-lasting, perfumed umbels bring a zing of acid chartreuse to the late-summer border. It grows to about 1m and can be cut back to ground level from late February. The silver plumes of *Miscanthus sinensis* would make a handsome association with the *Patrinia* and the nodding *Sanguisorba tenuifolia*, another Hokkaido native. □

Guides and maps

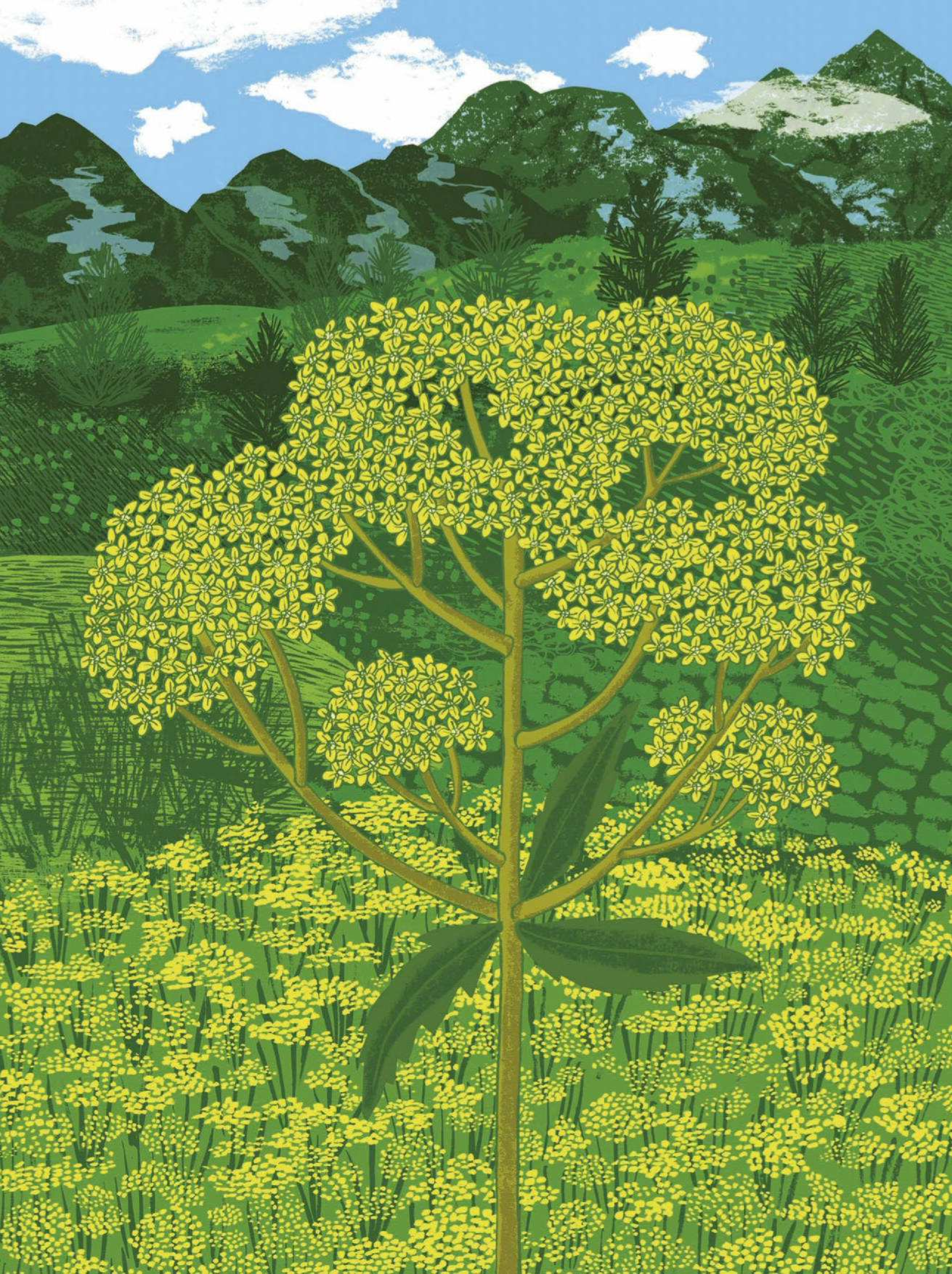
Hiking in Japan by Craig McLachlan, David Joll and Richard Ryall (Lonely Planet, 2009).
Wild Flowers of Japan: A Field Guide by Ran Levy (Kodansha International, 1995).

Download an offline vector map for your phone at **galileo-app.com**

Where to stay

Daisetsu Mori-no Garden
841-8 Kikusui, Kamikawa, Kamikawa District,
Hokkaido 078-1721, Japan.
Tel +81 (0)1658 2 4655, daisetsu-asahigaoka-jp
In the Kamikawa region, close to Daisetsuzan National Park, these interesting gardens house a choice of villas, a forest guest house, a café and a good restaurant.

Zaborin Ryokan
76-4, Hanazono, Kutchan, Abuta District,
Hokkaido 044-0084, Japan.
Tel +81 (0)136 23 0003, zaborin.com
Situated near Niseko, this secluded, luxury Japanese retreat offers 15 villas, each with its own private indoor *onsen*, as well as access to open-air hot spring baths in the woods. The hot springs also provide sustainable energy, and a restaurant serves locally sourced food.



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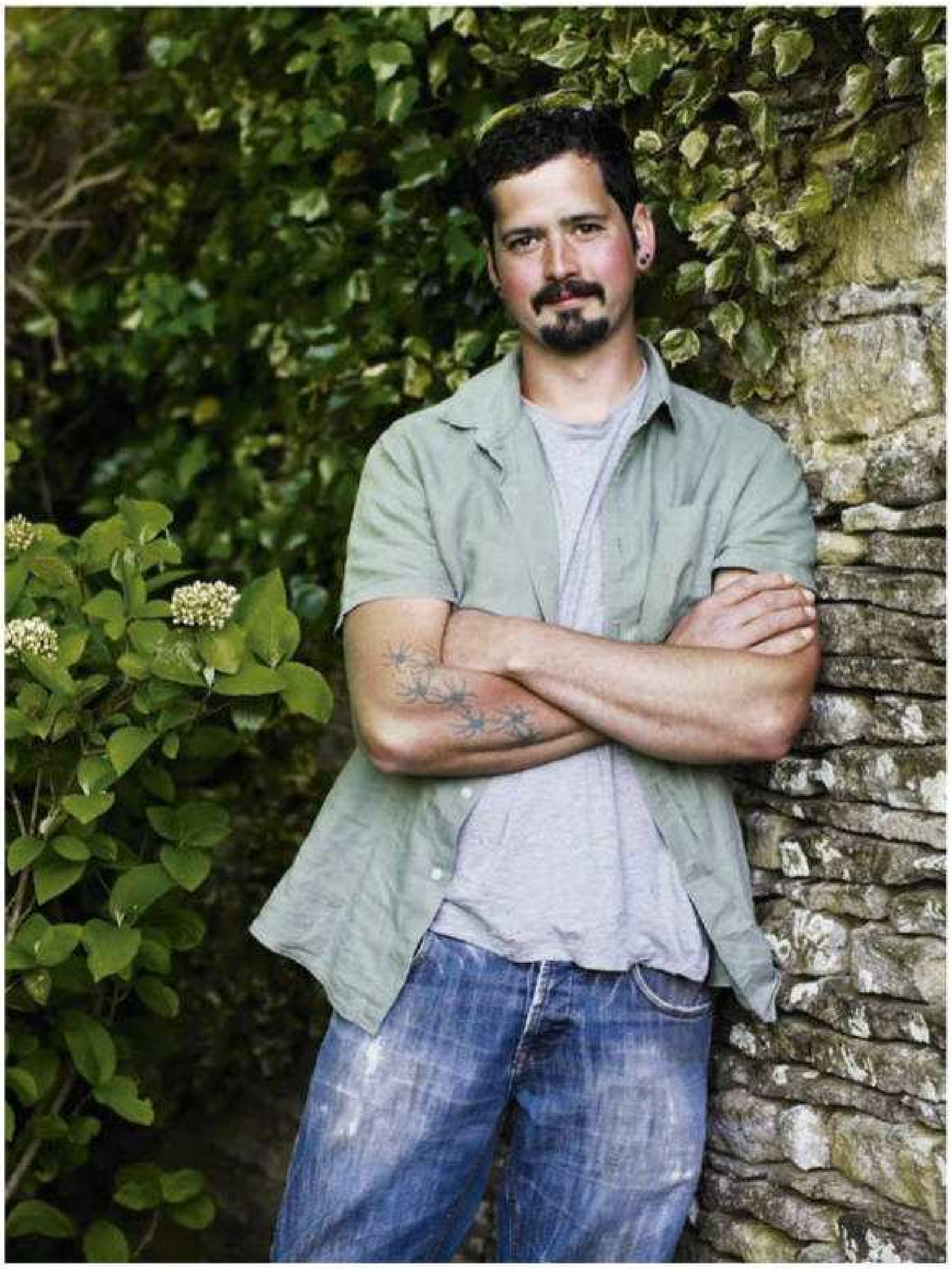

GARDENING TALENT

Alex Baldwin

Tree-loving Alex looks after a private garden in the Cotswolds, designed by Jinny Blom, and in his spare time likes exploring the forests of Snowdonia

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory My grandparents were always tinkering in their garden, often falling in the pond when tending to the rockery – much to my delight as a small child.

First plant love Trees: the bigger the better. As a child I was always climbing them. Nothing beats a big majestic oak to clamber through.

Who are your horticultural heroes and why? I find Piet Oudolf a really inspiring garden designer, with his mass planting schemes that billow like meadows and also look great throughout winter. My other hero is a friend of mine, Steve Gamble, a kitchen gardener on an estate where I used to work. There's not a single question I've asked him that he hasn't known the answer to. He's a wealth of knowledge and I'm honoured to have his help and advice just a phone call away.

Unsung hero of the plant world Every garden should have a hazel coppice, it's so useful. They can be planted as hedging, used as a foil, or trained into stunning specimen trees. Stems and twigs can be used as plant supports and are great for making Christmas wreaths. Then there are the delicious nuts, if you can get to them before the squirrels.

Least favourite plant group Bedding plants. I know they have their place, but they're just not for me I'm afraid.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Deal with pests as soon as you see them. Never be too afraid to give things a prune; just do your research and have a go. Always invest in the best tools and equipment you can afford, a good tool really does make the job easier and there's always a tool for every job.

Favourite landscape I love walking through forests and woodland. My favourite probably has to be the forest at Coed-y-Brenin in Snowdonia National Park. We holiday there a lot and every time we go it looks different, whether through seasonal change or Forestry Commission clearings or even the chaotic weather.

Most valuable training If you're planning a career in gardening, it's important to get a qualification, but the best training is doing the job day in, season out. You'll be surprised how soon you get in sync with the seasons and anticipate the next show of flowers, although, given our changeable weather, they can be slightly erratic.

Favourite gardening books I love reference books and really like *The Thoughtful Gardener* by Jinny Blom. I like her approach to talking about her memories and emotions when planning gardens.

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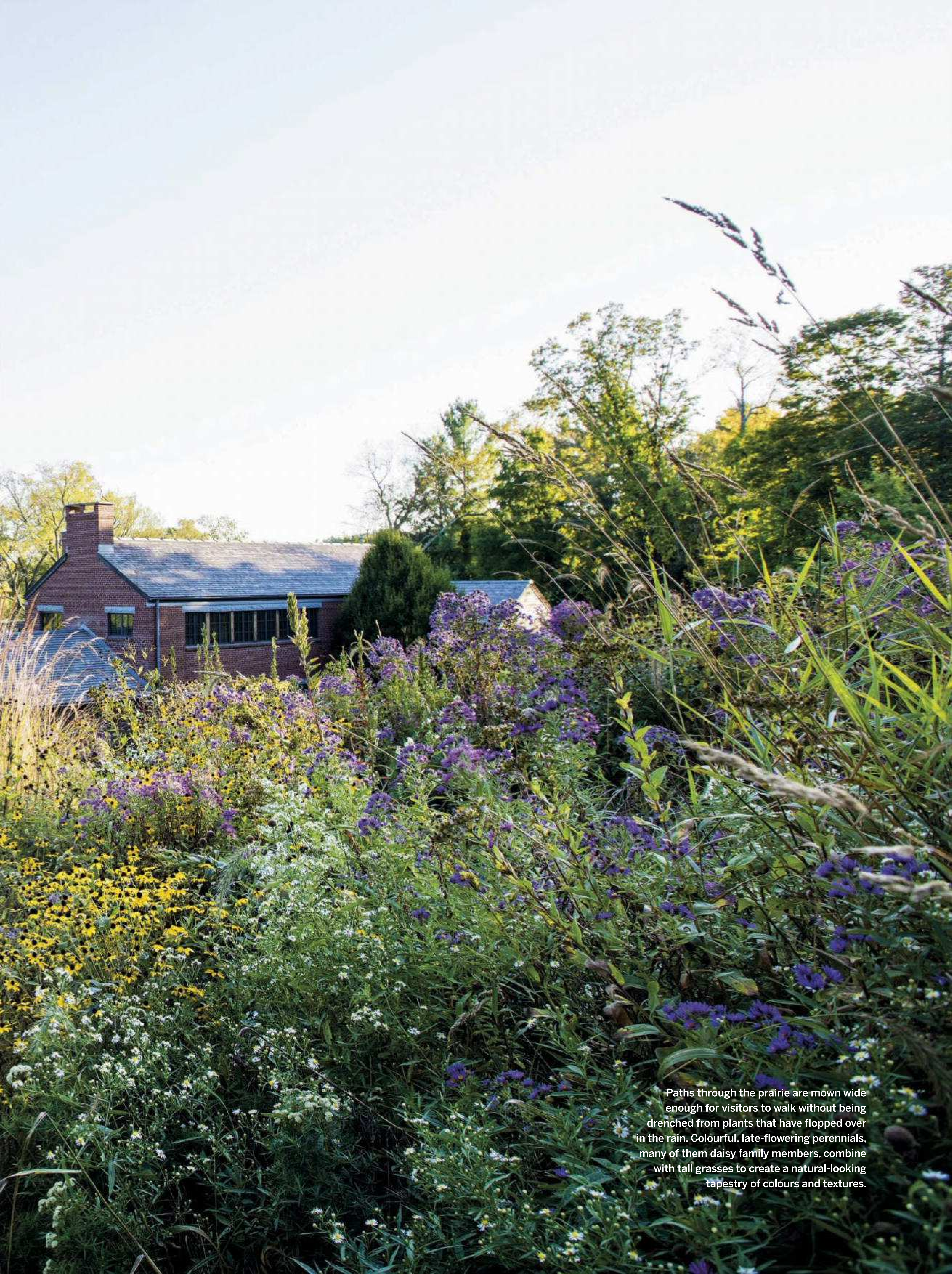
REVOLUTIONARY THINKING

In the garden surrounding a lakeside house in Connecticut, Larry Weaner has created a prairie garden of North American natives that puts ecology centre stage

WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

IN BRIEF

What A native grass and wildflower prairie that forms part of a lakeside garden.
Where Connecticut, USA.
Size Two acres.
Climate Continental with winter temperatures falling as low as -26°C, and warm, humid summers.
Soil Calcareous loam.
Hardiness zone USDA 5b.



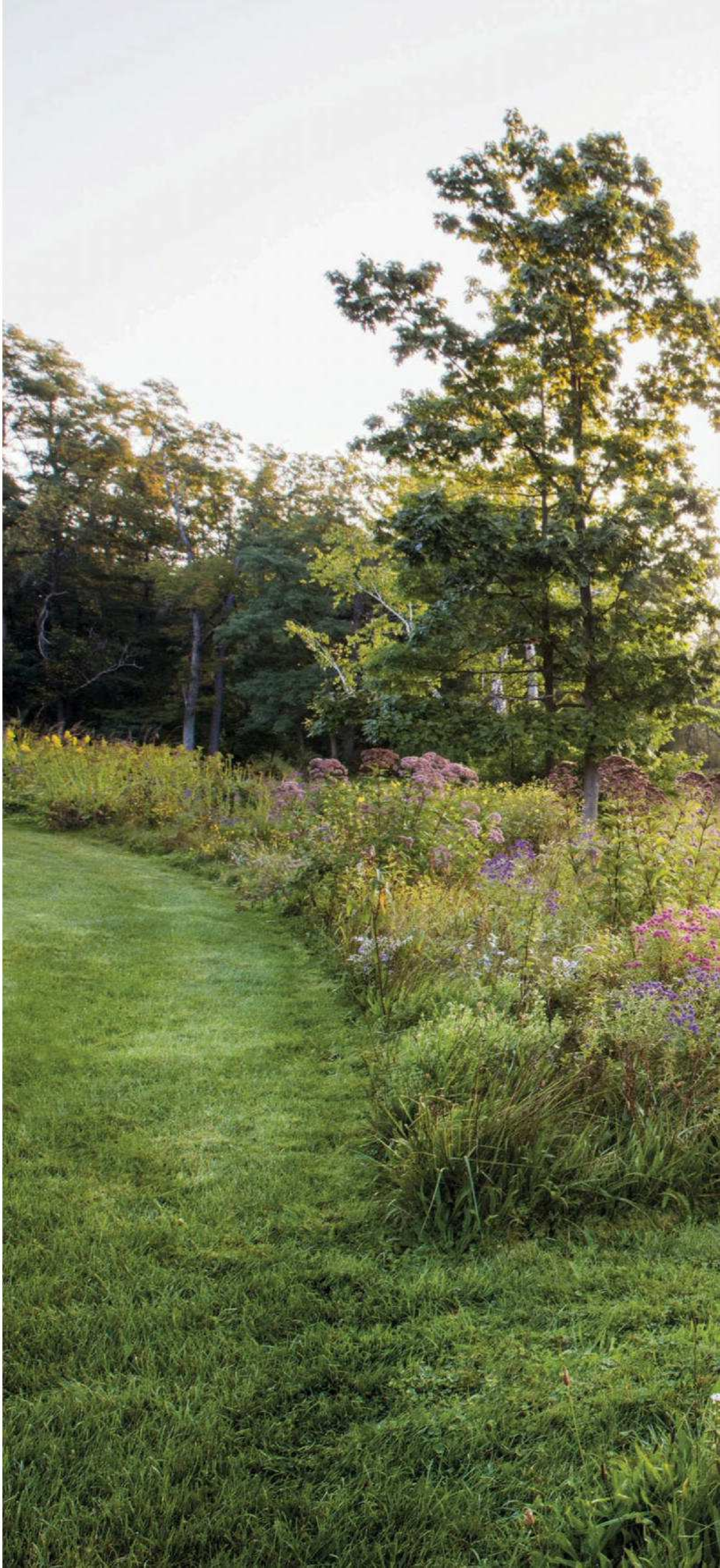
Paths through the prairie are mown wide enough for visitors to walk without being drenched from plants that have flopped over in the rain. Colourful, late-flowering perennials, many of them daisy family members, combine with tall grasses to create a natural-looking tapestry of colours and textures.

Along the edge of Lake Wononscopomuc in Litchfield County, Connecticut you'll find many gardens with neat, manicured lawns. Not that of Liz Glazer and Bill Montgomery who both thought a lawn too boring and suburban for such a pretty rural place. They wanted something wilder for their weekend home; a garden that would offer year-round beauty and be easier to maintain on the steeply sloping site, so turned to landscape architect Jamie Purinton, who specialises in natural, ecological gardens, for ideas. She suggested a meadow for part of the garden that would sweep along the drive, around the house and down to the lake, and in 2009 she brought in wildflower planting expert, Larry Weaner.

Larry is the author, with Thomas Christopher, of the award-winning book *Garden Revolution* and is behind one of the key developments in US garden design over the past few years: the use of native, North American plants. His landscape design practice Larry Weaner Landscape Associates (LWLA) combines design with environmental science. Larry may add or take out some plants for aesthetic reasons – adding design to ecology – but unlike conventional designs where plants are picked to fit a particular aesthetic, for Larry plants are the starting point. "I'm putting plants together that are right for the habitat and work together, that comes first," he explains.

The plants Larry uses are adapted to the soil and climate of a specific site and for Liz and Bill's garden, he created seed mixes tailored to the site's varied soil types – damp near the lake, dry on the slopes – combined with some container-grown plants, but all are American natives, many from the New England region.

When Jamie first suggested a meadow Liz and Bill imagined classic French fields of waving grasses and poppies. What Larry has created is less French more American and should more correctly be termed a prairie. The flora is sufficiently diverse to remain sensitive to the garden's overall aesthetic. Along the driveway, ▷



Right The prairie culminates in a lawn offering views over Lake Wononscopomuc. Near the water's edge moisture-loving *Eupatorium maculatum* flourishes, surrounded by the shorter *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* and *S. racemosum*. Tall planting close to the lake's edge also helps to keep geese out of the garden as they don't like to walk through vegetation they can't see over.

British prairies

Would a prairie using American natives work in the UK? Although the prairie plants used in this garden are not native to northern Europe, many have been part of our garden history for almost 200 years, and, with a few exceptions, they have behaved well. Most are an excellent source of nectar for pollinators in late summer and autumn, at a time when our native species have little to offer. They are also strong growers on fertile soils, so it is no surprise that for more than 20 years researchers in the UK and in Germany have been looking at using them to create colourful low-maintenance combinations for public space plantings.

Many of the species used in this prairie are already familiar to British gardeners as border plants, but they also will flourish in a naturalised, prairie-style planting, although you will need to cut back early spring grass. Among the toughest survivors for prairie-planting are two non-invasive goldenrods, *Solidago rugosa* and *Solidago rigida*, tall yellow daisy *Rudbeckia laciniata*, some of the asters, such as blue *Symphyotrichum laeve* and white *Eurybia divaricata,* along with the tall, pink-flowered species of *Eupatorium*, such as *Eupatorium maculatum*. Earlier in the year, there are several species and cultivars of the prairie bulb genus *Camassia* that will easily naturalise in grass.

▷ for example, Liz and Bill asked for the planting to be kept low so they didn't lose sight of the retaining stone walls. Closer to the house the couple wanted the prairie to have more of a grassy feel, so Larry picked flowering species, including *Liatris spicata* and *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium,* that have narrow grassy foliage and set them among short-growing grasses, such as *Schizachyrium scoparium*.

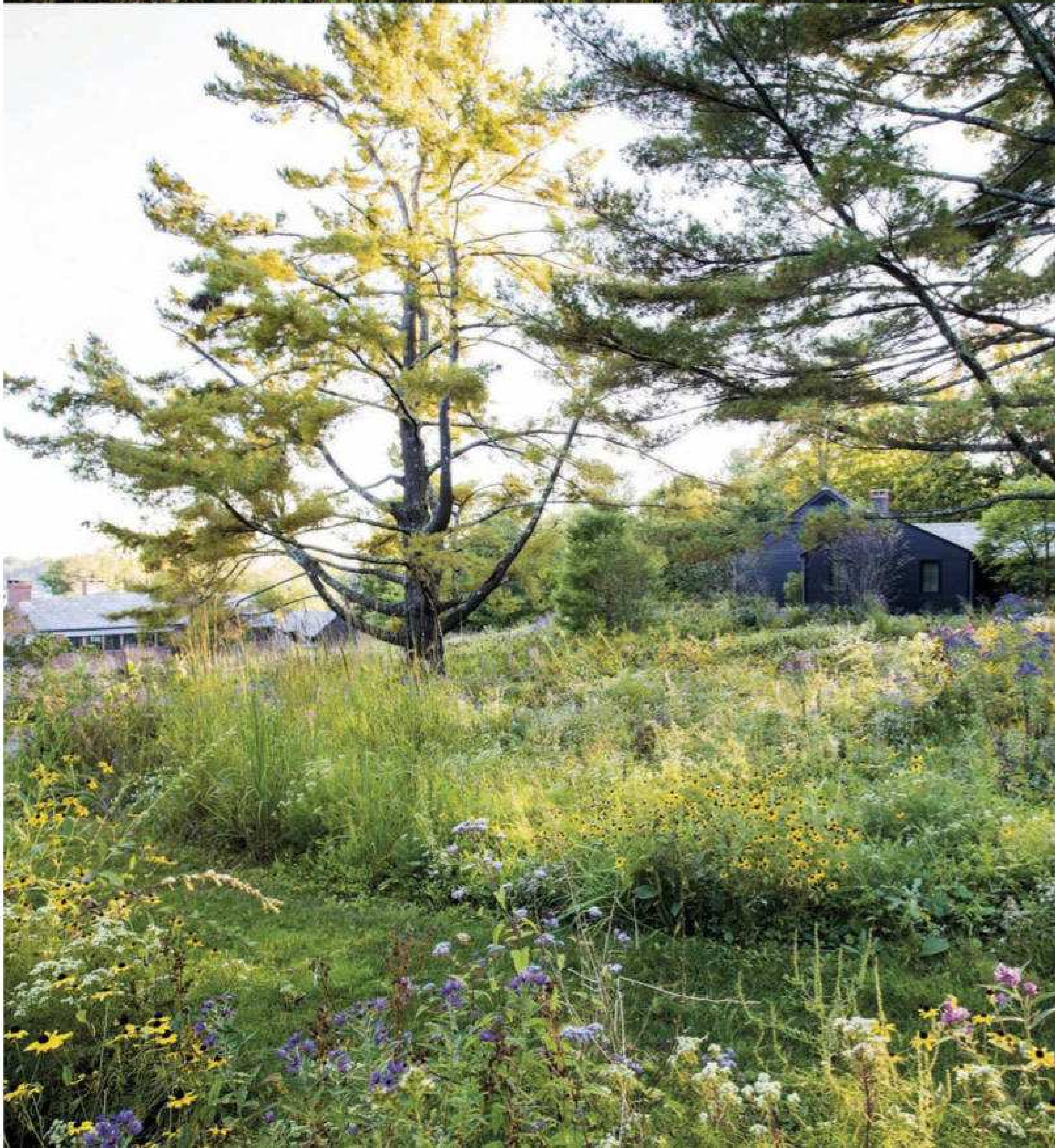
Liz and Bill also wanted lots of colour, and love the fact that colours changes with the seasons, with the bright greeny-yellow of the umbellifer *Zizia aurea* in early May, giving way to the pink-white flower spikes of *Penstemon digitalis* and then to the indigo-blue flowers spikes of *Baptisia australis*. Over time the composition of the prairie will change as plants take hold. Larry expects change to be slow, as he has largely kept out the tallest grasses. "Species such as *Panicum virgatum* are very competitive, so we use them in isolated clumps," he explains. "But they're keystone plants for the community and I really don't want to exclude them entirely."

In late winter the prairie is cut back, although Larry is reluctant to use the word 'maintenance'. All processes carried out in a naturalistic garden, he points out, will impact on the species mix, so its design is always an ongoing process. For Liz and Bill change is part of the pleasure. "It is remarkably changeable, week by week, season by season and year by year," says Bill. "It's an organic and wild thing; it decides what will thrive and where. That is one of its joys and surprises." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Larry Weaner Landscape Associates at **lweanerassociates.com**

Turn the page for 16 key prairie plants



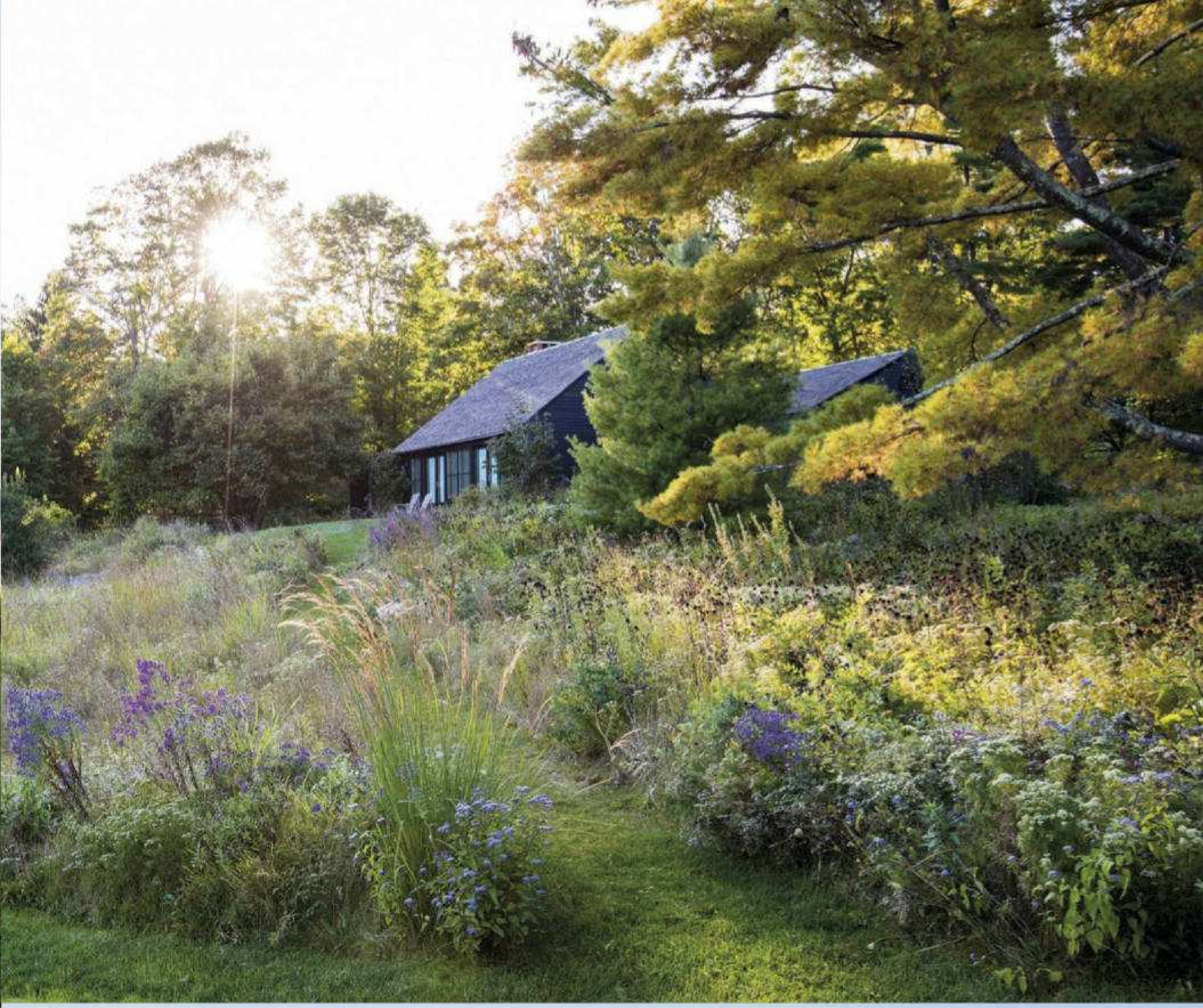
Clockwise from top left

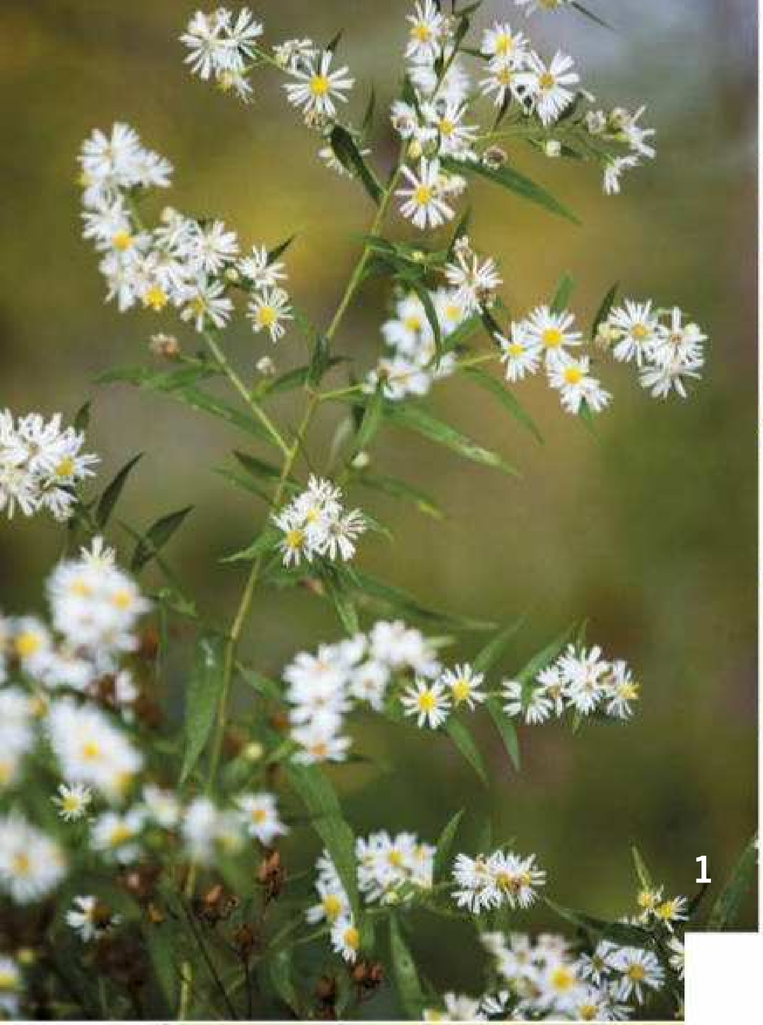
***Rudbeckia triloba* provides** a splash of yellow near the lake. It is a short-lived species that can die out over time to be replaced by longer-lived species.

The walk up to the guest house is lined with several species of aster, including the New England *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*. On slopes they are more likely to survive competition from grasses over time.

Tall pink *Eupatorium maculatum* frames a gate separating the prairie from a more conventional lawn. It's a versatile structure plant for prairie situations that only spreads very slowly.

Prairie planting on either side of a broad mown path. Planting of this height avoids the 'hemmed-in' feeling that you can sometimes get when using taller grasses and perennials.





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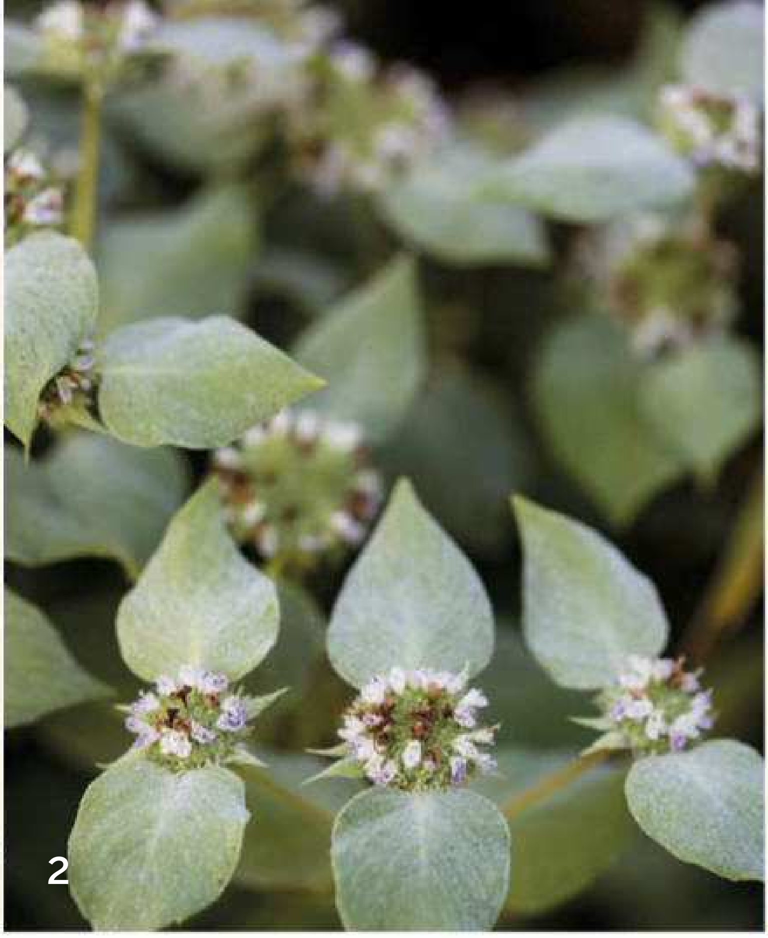

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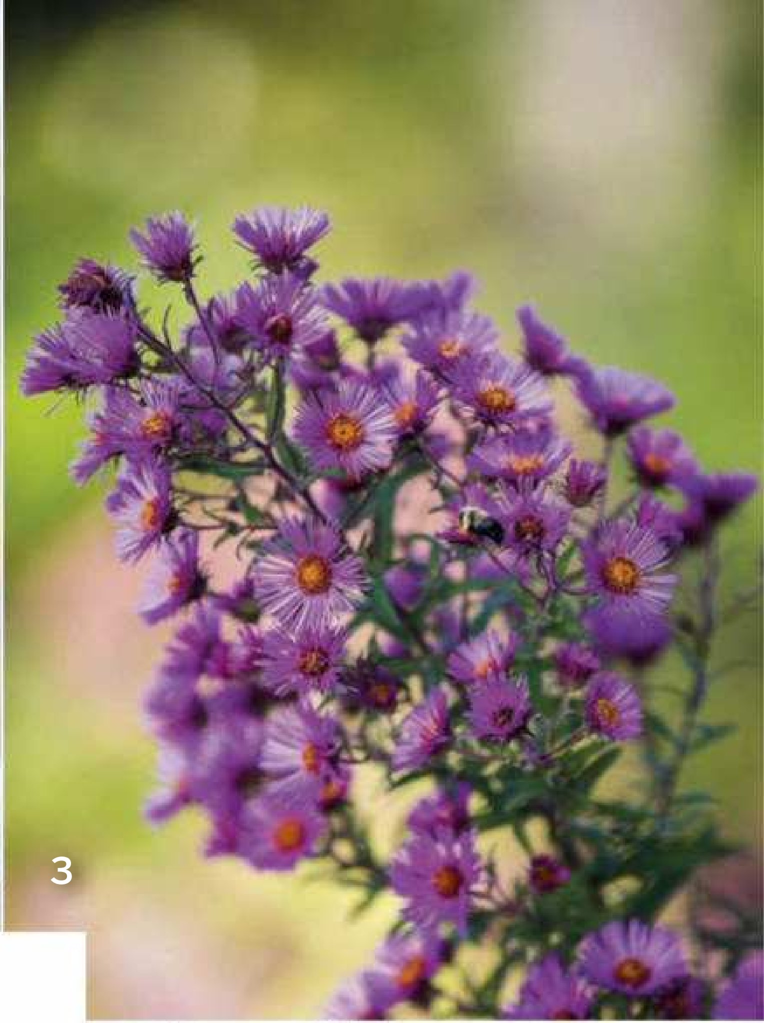

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KEY PRAIRIE PLANTS

1 *Symphyotrichum racemosum*
Branching flowerheads on upright stems give this aster useful bulk. Forms a lowly expanding clump. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b†.

2 *Pycnanthemum muticum*
Aromatic perennial with long-lasting silvery bracts and a strong minty scent. It's an especially noted pollinator loved by butterflies. Happy in sun or light shade. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*
An upright species of aster that is important for providing late-season colour, which can vary from pink to dark purple. Best in sun. Prefers rich, moist soils. Will self-seed. 1.2-2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

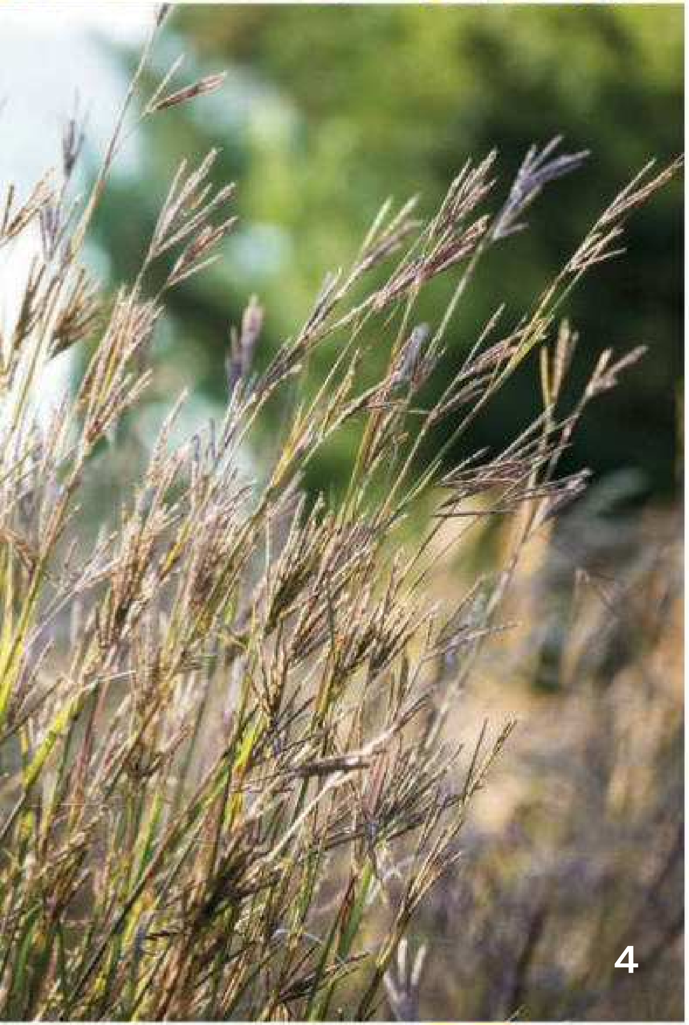
4 *Andropogon gerardii*
The most important prairie grass. Known as bluestem for its blue-green early growth that develops good autumn colour. It's vigorous in full sun and any soil that's not too fertile. 2.5m. USDA 4a-9b.

5 *Schizachyrium scoparium*
A relatively short prairie grass, known as little bluestem for its very blue early foliage. Especially attractive autumnal colour. Clump-forming, but often weak-stemmed. 80cm RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

6 *Rudbeckia triloba*
Commonly known as brown-eyed Susan, this prairie plant is native to much of central USA. Very free-flowering but short-lived, often seeding in open soil. Best in full sun. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

7 *Elymus riparius*
A clump-forming grass with dark-green foliage that flourishes on moist soils, including stream banks. 1.2m. USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Solidago speciosa*
One of the most elegant goldenrods that provides a good source of nectar for butterflies later than many other plants. 90cm. USDA 3a-8b.



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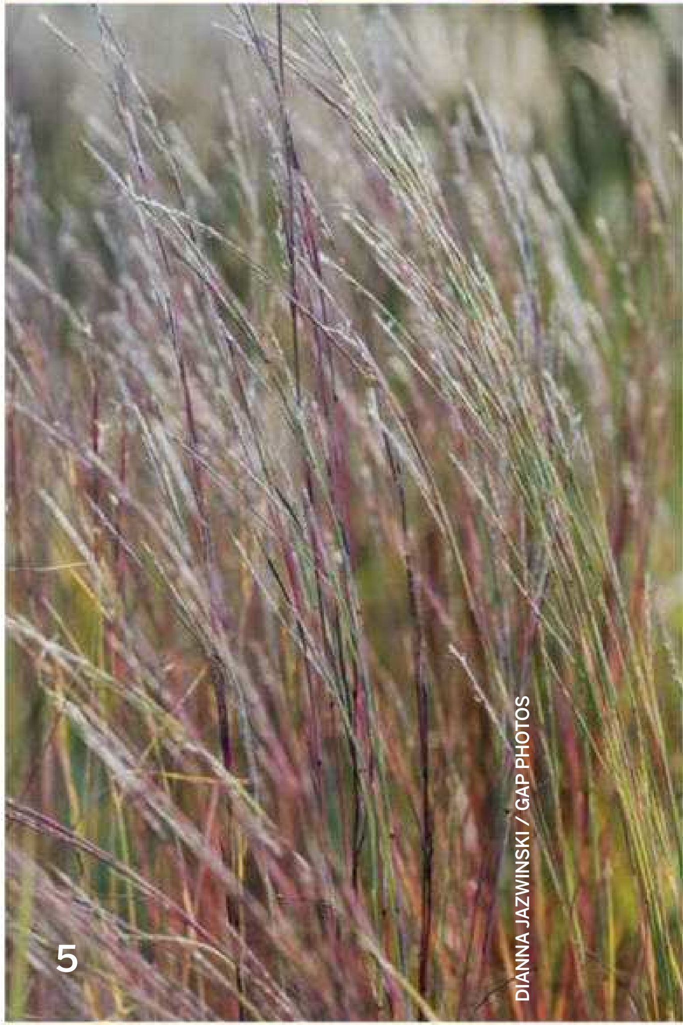

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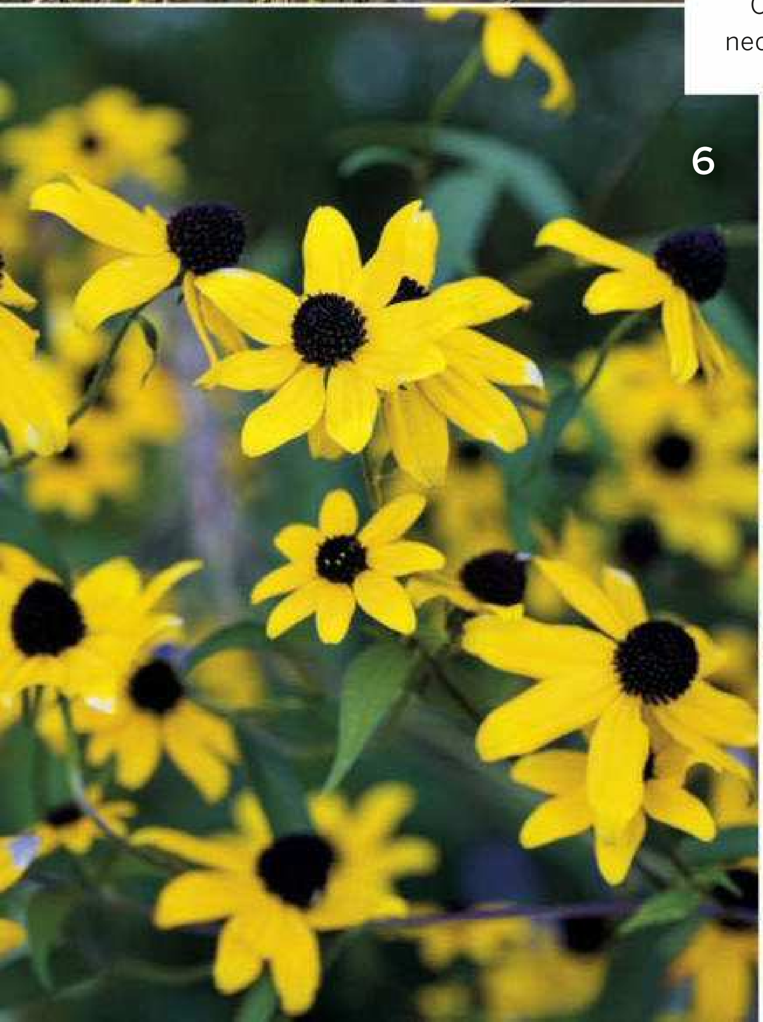

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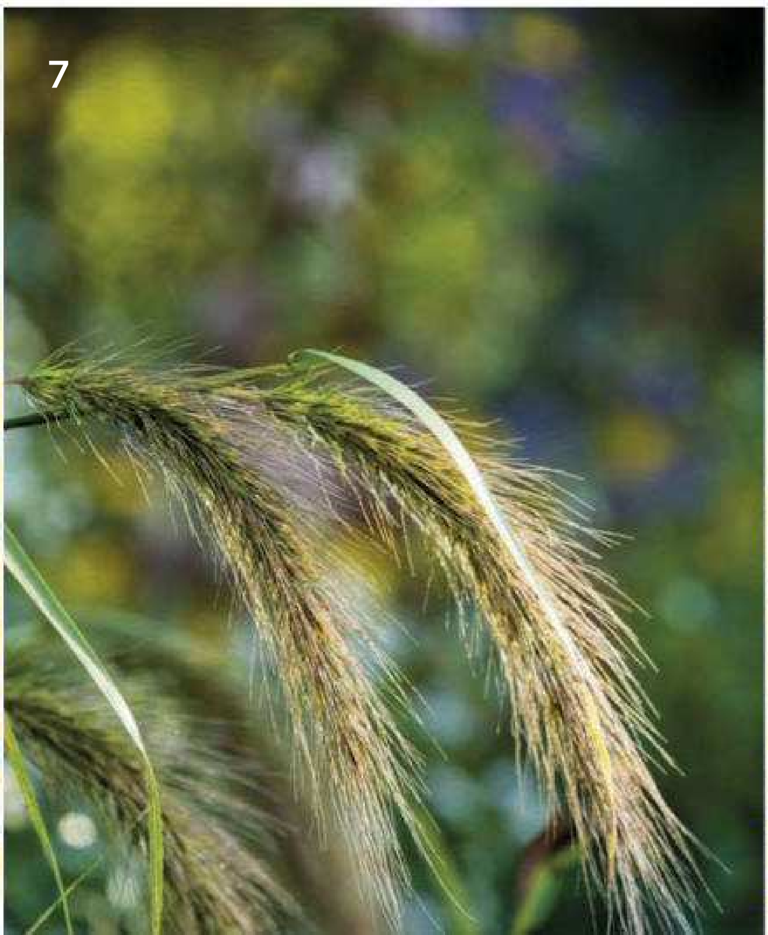

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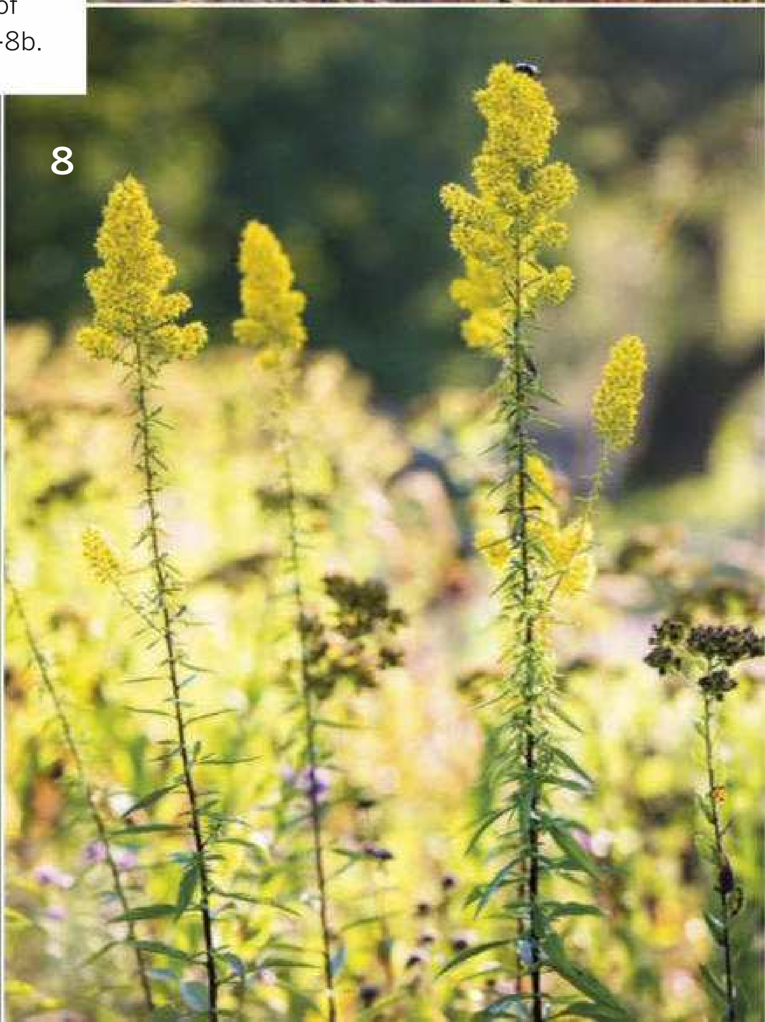

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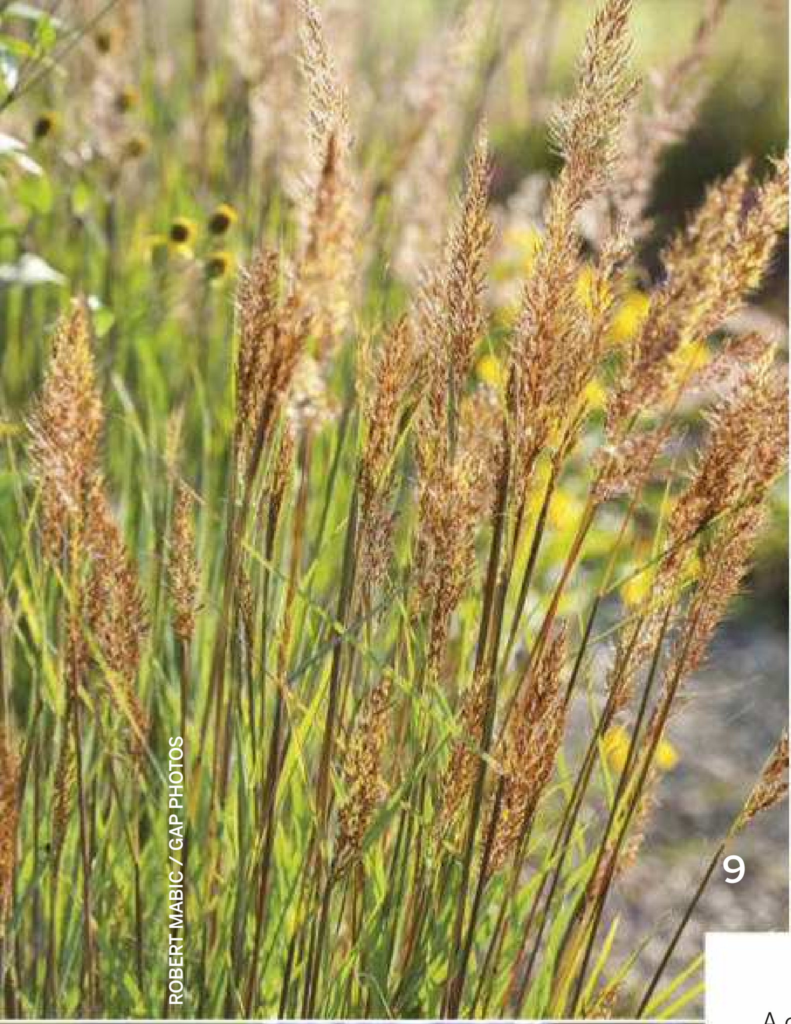
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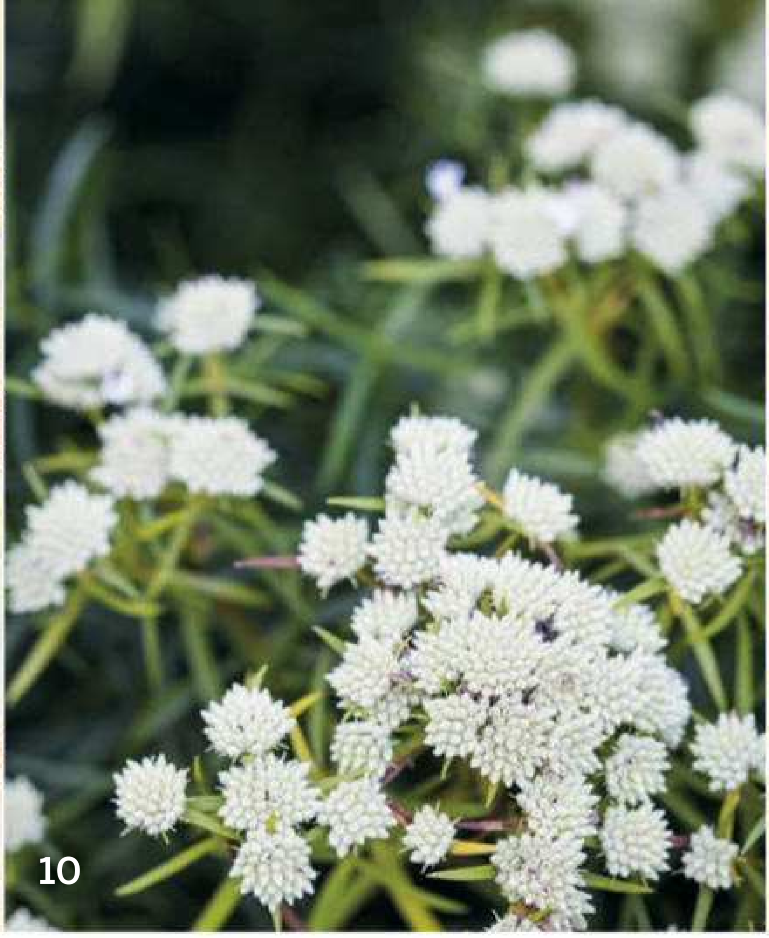
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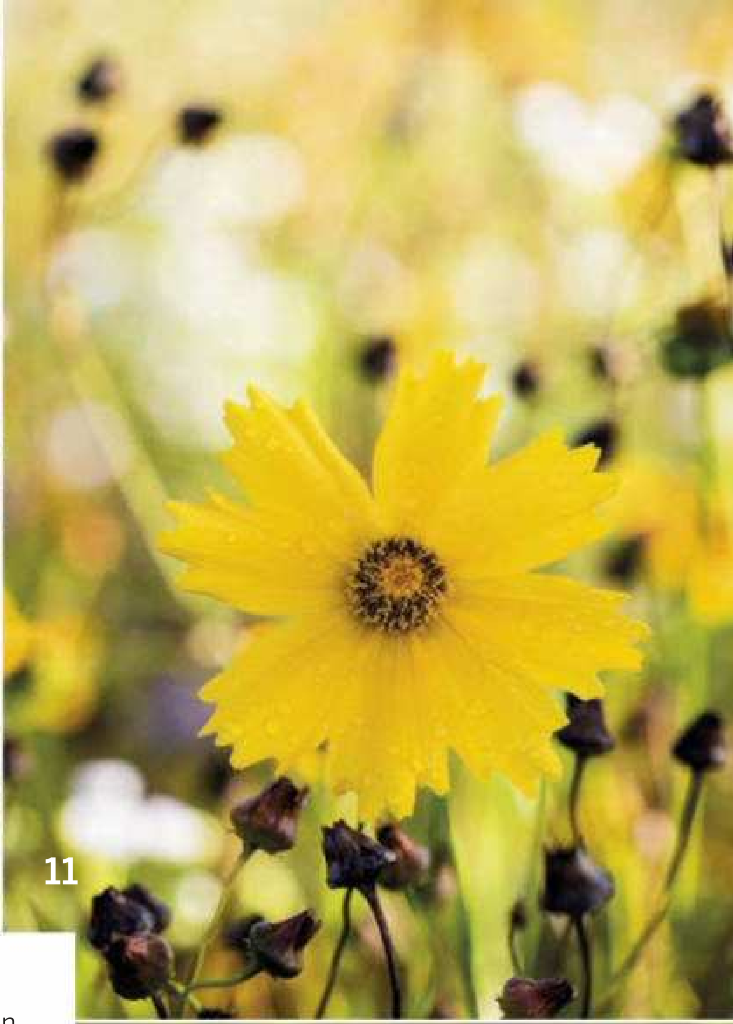
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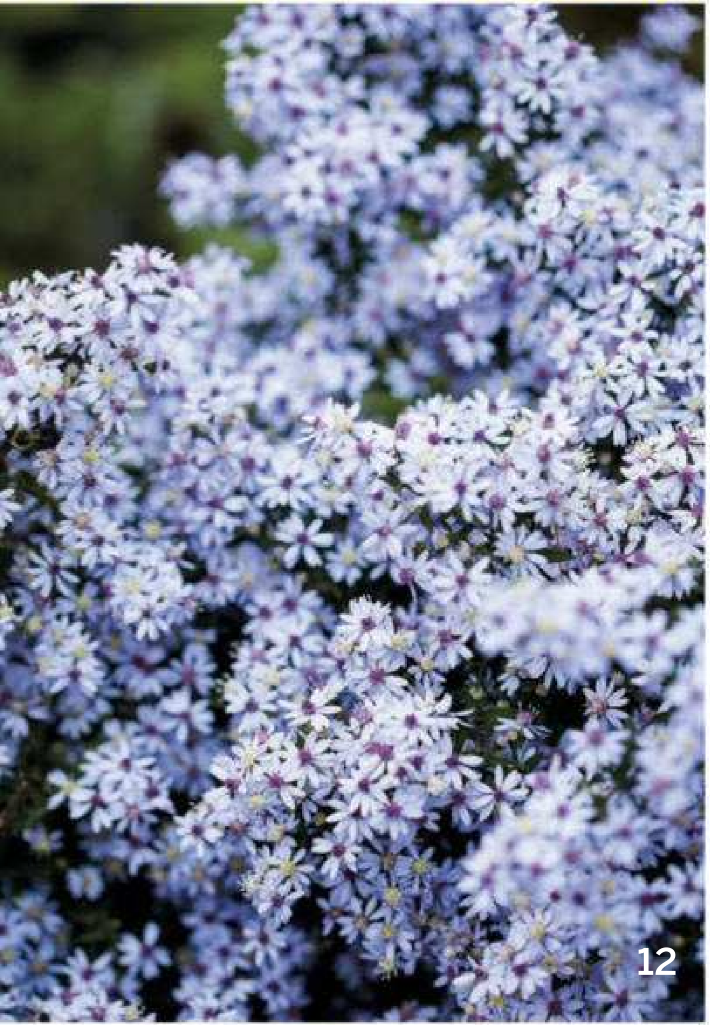
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9 *Sorghastrum nutans* 'Sioux Blue'
A clump-forming prairie grass that is not too vigorous. Its rich brown seedheads are a strong autumn feature. 1.5m. USDA 4a-9b.

10 *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*
Although commonly known as mountain mint, this highly aromatic mint relative is generally found in dry prairies. Loved by pollinators, it's happy in any soil in sun, and spreads steadily. 90cm. USDA 4a-8b.

11 *Coreopsis lanceolata*
A cheerful, spreading perennial that is best in full sun and seemingly happy on drier soils. 90cm. USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Symphyotrichum cordifolium*
Free-flowering aster that is happy in sun or light shade, and has some tolerance of drier soils. Naturalises easily, and is a good plant to mix with spring perennials. 90cm. USDA 3a-8b.

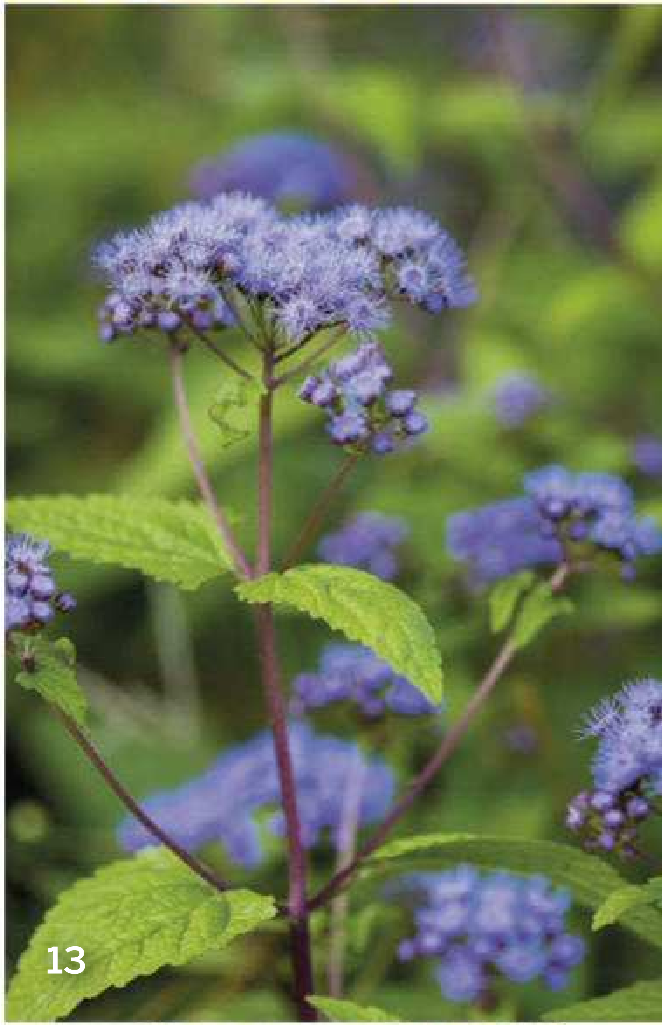
13 *Conoclinium coelestinum*
An easily grown perennial that provides a haze of purple-blue flowers from July to October, and is long-flowering in sun or light shade. Can spread rapidly in warm gardens. 80cm. USDA 5a-10b.

14 *Tridens flavus*
A robust and magnificent tussock-forming grass that is relatively tolerant of both drought and salt. 1.8m. USDA 5a-9b.

15 *Coreopsis tinctoria*
An annual with a long flowering season from a spring sowing. Suitable only for disturbed sites. 60m. USDA 2a-11.

16 *Eupatorium maculatum*
This tall perennial, commonly known as Joe Pye weed, has very strong upright stems and dull pink flowers that attract butterflies. Prefers sun and moister soils. Slowly clump-forming. 2m. USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.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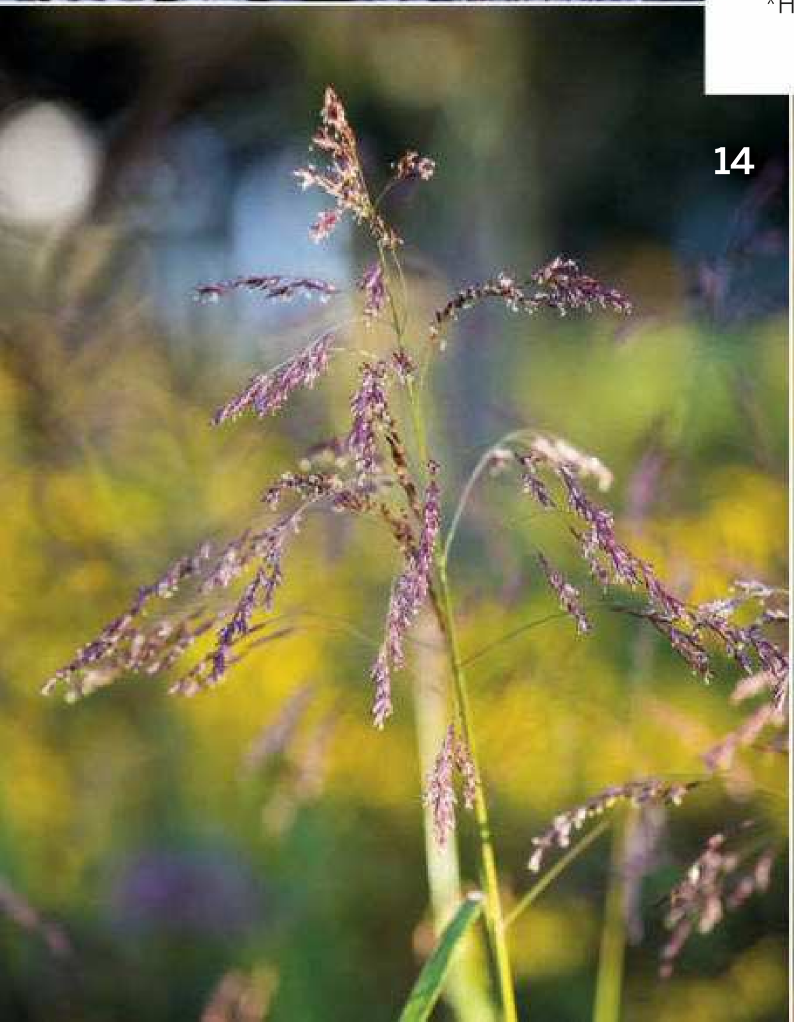
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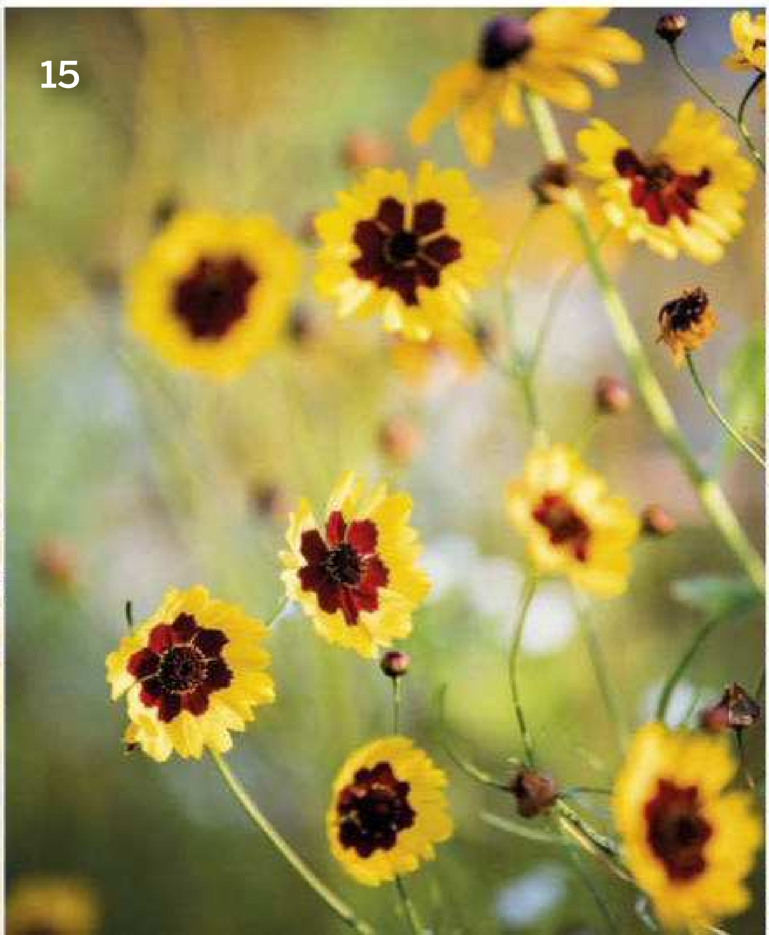
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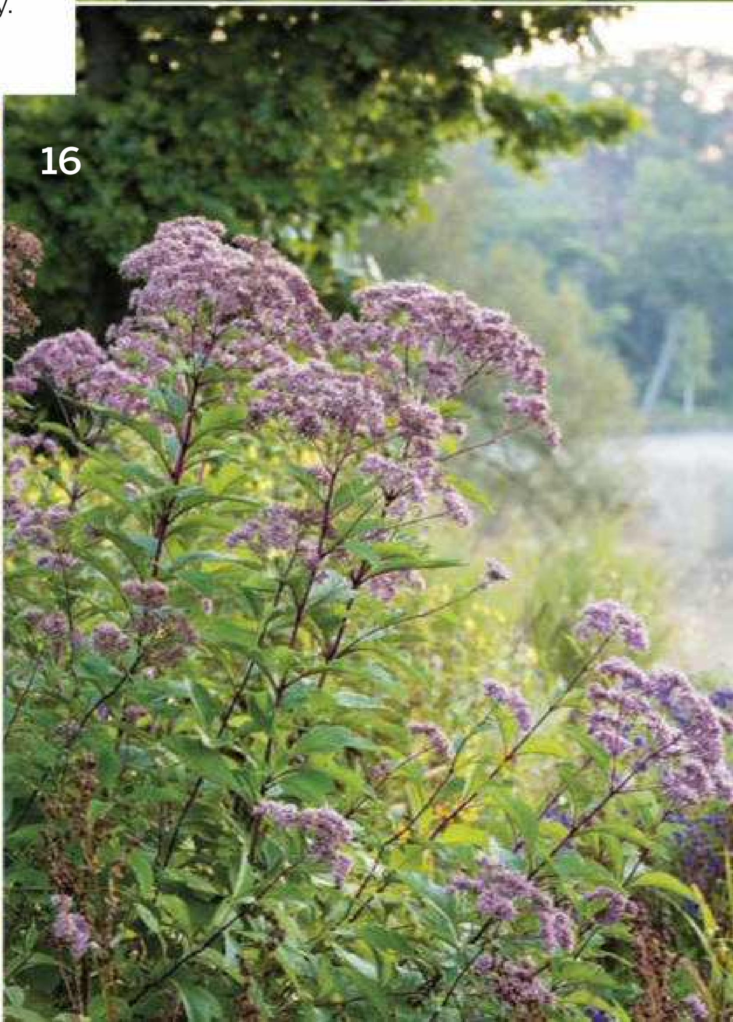
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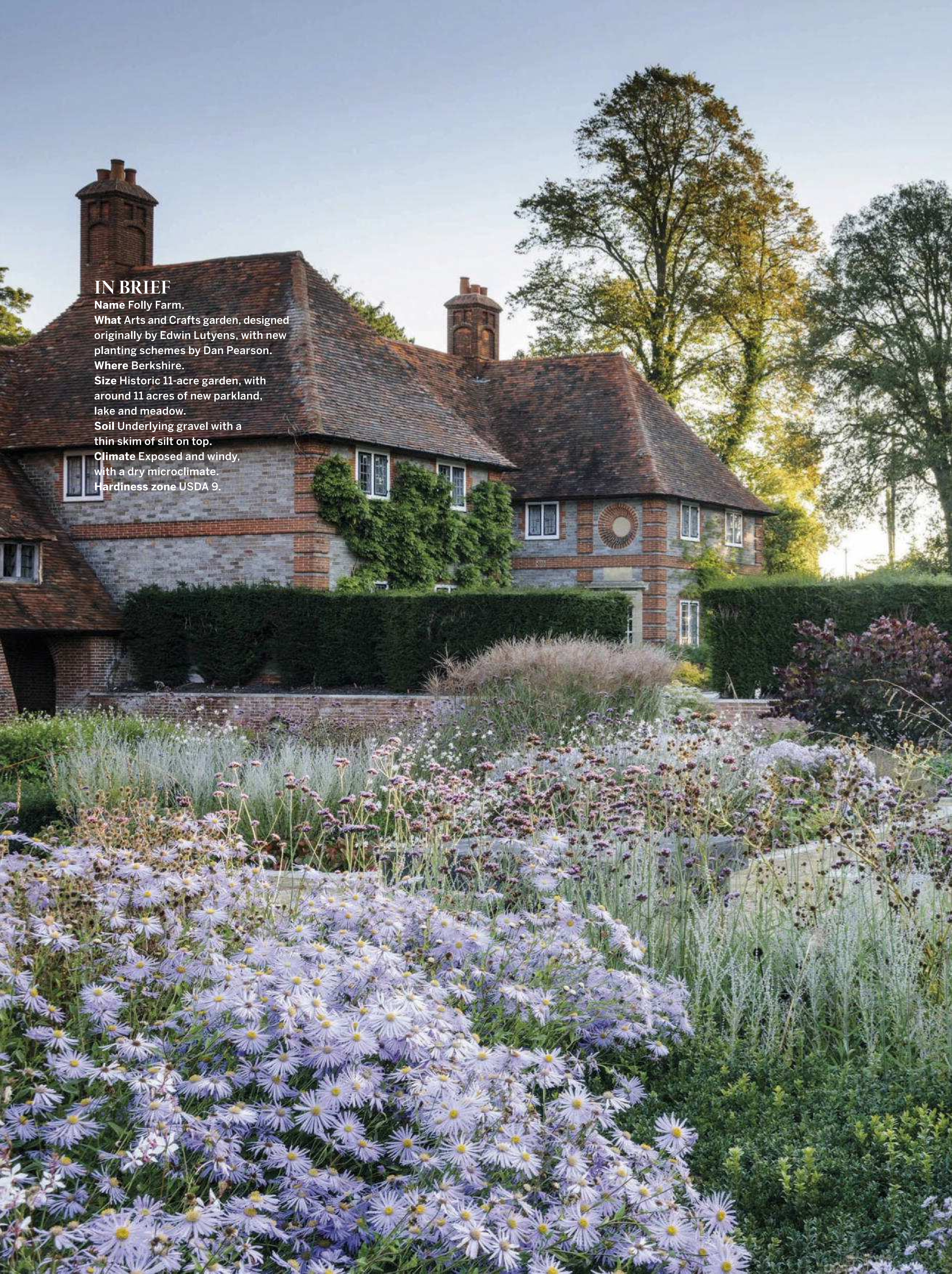
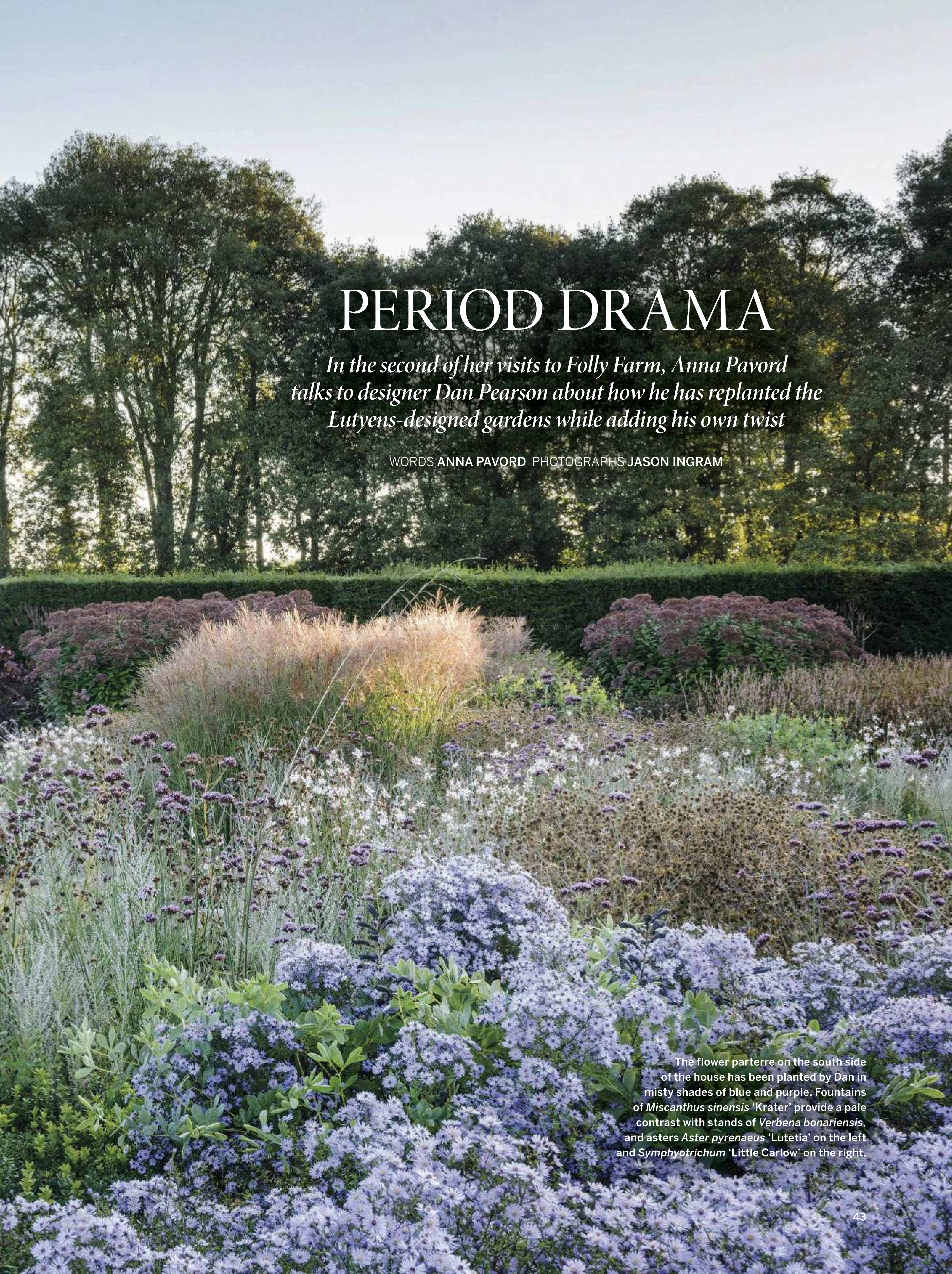


IN BRIEF

Name Folly Farm.
What Arts and Crafts garden, designed originally by Edwin Lutyens, with new planting schemes by Dan Pearson.
Where Berkshire.
Size Historic 11-acre garden, with around 11 acres of new parkland, lake and meadow.
Soil Underlying gravel with a thin skim of silt on top.
Climate Exposed and windy, with a dry microclimate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.



PERIOD DRAMA

In the second of her visits to Folly Farm, Anna Pavord talks to designer Dan Pearson about how he has replanted the Lutyens-designed gardens while adding his own twist

WORDS **ANNA PAVORD** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

The flower parterre on the south side of the house has been planted by Dan in misty shades of blue and purple. Fountains of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Krater' provide a pale contrast with stands of *Verbena bonariensis*, and asters *Aster pyrenaeus* 'Lutetia' on the left and *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow' on the right.

The garden at Folly Farm in Berkshire was originally laid out by the Edwardian architect Edwin Lutyens. Now, in the 21st century, it has been lucky to come into the hands of new owners who understand its importance and who, during the past ten years have overseen an extraordinarily complex restoration of the house and recreation of the garden. Designer Dan Pearson was asked to re-invigorate the historic core of the garden with new planting schemes. Moving beyond the original boundaries, he has also created a wider landscape in which the garden could more comfortably sit. Folly Farm has become, once again, a wonder of its age, a place of exceptional beauty and elegance.

It was fortunate, as Dan acknowledges, that the current owners were interested in moving the garden forward, giving the place another chapter in its history, while still honouring what had gone before. Pastiche was absolutely not the point. The original planting plans (by plantswoman Gertrude Jekyll) still exist, but simply reinstating the early work was never an option. "We decided on a different colour palette for each part of the garden," Dan explains. "In the flower parterre in front of the house we worked with silvers, blues and purples. We use some of the plants Jekyll used, such as miscanthus, but we use it differently, in a much more formal way."

In high summer, the four beds of the flower parterre now overflow with exuberant stands of dark eupatorium, smudgy, smoky waves of verbena and gaura, spires of perovskia and white willow herb, spiky sea thistles and soft mounds of mauve *Aster pyrenaeus* 'Lutetia'. The purple foliage of *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple' billows out against an immaculate background of clipped yew hedge.

Interspersed, asymmetrically, in the beds are big low squares of clipped box, calm oases for the eyes in the overflowing magnificence of the scene. Carefully, unobtrusively, a twiggy underpinning keeps the herbaceous plants away from the edges of the box. The gardeners at Folly Farm are superb: it is glorious (and unusual) to find a team so skilled, so intent on excellence.

Yew hedges were often used by Lutyens to disguise slopes, drops in level between one area of the original garden and the next. By the time Dan arrived, they had increased massively in girth. "They were swallowing up space and so affecting the geometry of the garden. Gradually we've been reducing their width, and also deciding on the right height to cut them. Even though the garden is on different levels, you should be able to look across the whole space and see the hedges all at the same height."

The Sunken Garden, which lies to the west of the house, Dan describes as a "really, really difficult area to resolve." He got round the problem by thinking of it as a single piece of pastry from which these difficult spaces had been cut out. "But," as he emphasises, "the Sunken Garden had to work as a whole, not as a series of weirdly shaped beds. We had to allow the hard landscaping to be strong, because this is perhaps the most iconic of all the different areas Lutyens conceived for Folly Farm."

Traditionally the space had been filled with roses, with steps from each corner bed sweeping down to a pool and a central island planted with lavender. With Dan's new planting, it has become one of the great highlights of the late summer garden, a blaze of hot colours in contrast to the misty blues and greys of the Parterre Garden. It is a place fiery with daylilies and red hot pokers, brilliant crocosmias and *Potentilla* 'Gibson's Scarlet'.

It's a wonderful piece of theatre, as the space is entirely enclosed within yew hedges. You emerge at the top of one of the curved flights of steps unprepared for the flaming display below: the rich, splayed flowers of *Hemerocallis* 'Tigereye Spider' and yellow *Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus*, spearheads of *Kniphofia* 'Rich Echoes' and 'Timothy' glowing like hot coals. Swaying above are the tall, bleached stems of *Stipa gigantea*, with *Nepeta govaniana* the colour of acid drops, providing the stitching in between.

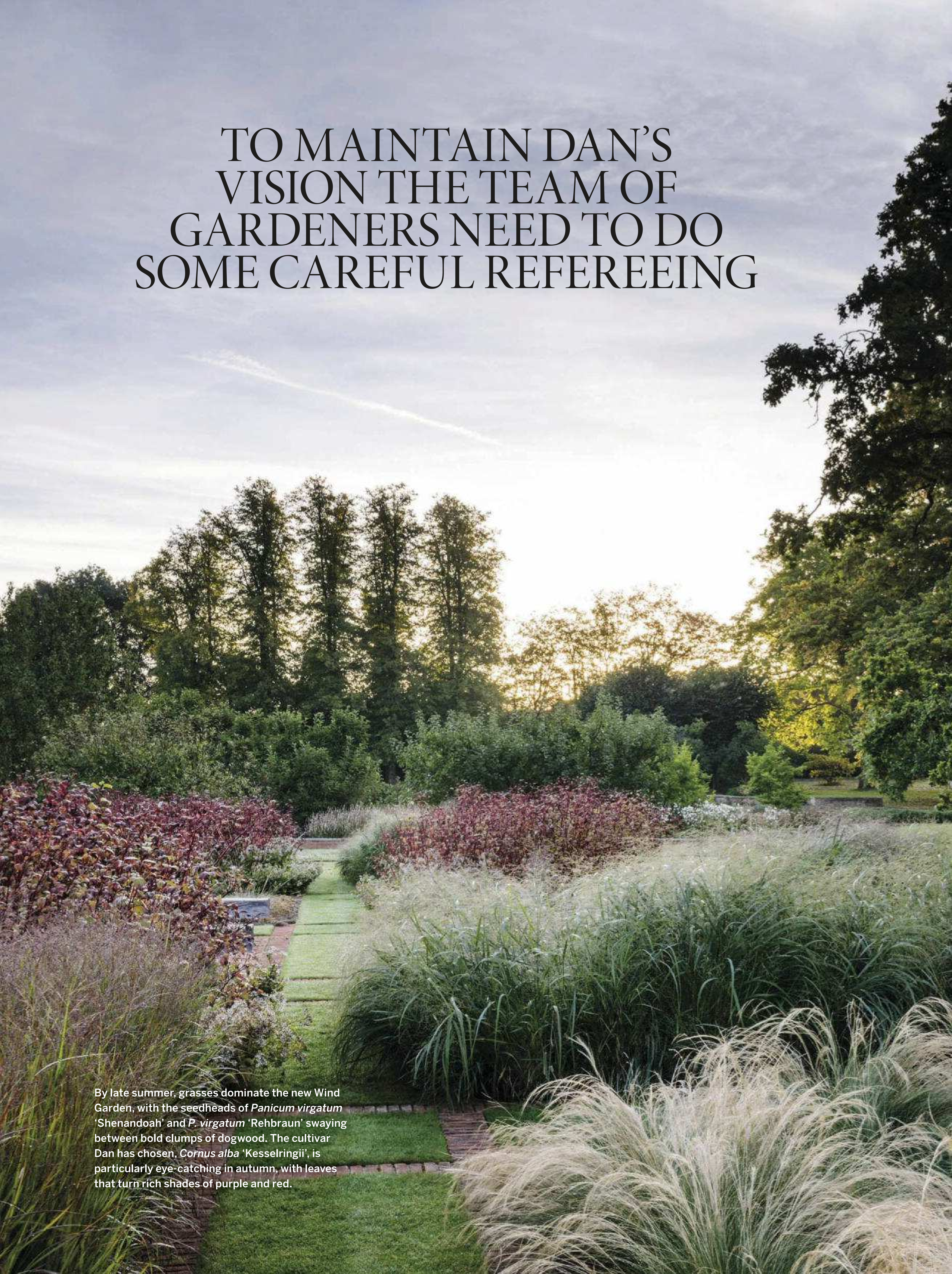
"We used *Euphorbia* x *pasteurii* 'Roundway Titan' as important bulwarks on the corner terraces, above the steps" Dan explains. "Each terrace has a slightly different character, but there is an overall unity." On either side, towering over the planting, are tall *Ailanthus altissima* 'Hongye' with handsome pinnate leaves. But are they getting too tall, wonders head gardener, Tim Stretton? Is it now time to stool down these trees of heaven, as Dan intended in his original plan? And what about the outrageous tetrapanax that has taken over one border almost entirely for itself. Should it be reined in a little so as not to get in the way of a neighbouring magnolia? No garden stands still and to maintain Dan's vision the team of gardeners need to do some careful refereeing to make sure the heavyweights don't have things entirely their own way.

The walled kitchen garden provides another stupendous summer highlight at Folly Farm. Dan divided the acre into four zones: one part is a cutting garden, which includes roses such as Darcey Bussell (= 'Ausdecorum') and Munstead Wood (= 'Ausbernard') to provide flowers for the house. There's a lavender 'field', planted in long, Provençal-like parallels that weave in and out of each other on the ground. Huge tripods, smothered in summer with hops and handsome, parsley-leaved blackberries, rise out of beds surging with pumpkins and squashes. There are beautiful fruit cages, built of green oak, towers of sweet peas and an oak pergola shaded with vines. There are herb beds and salad beds, asparagus beds and strawberry beds. Blueberries grow in huge terracotta pots. There are figs and immaculately trained pears on the walls. In short, it is heaven on earth.

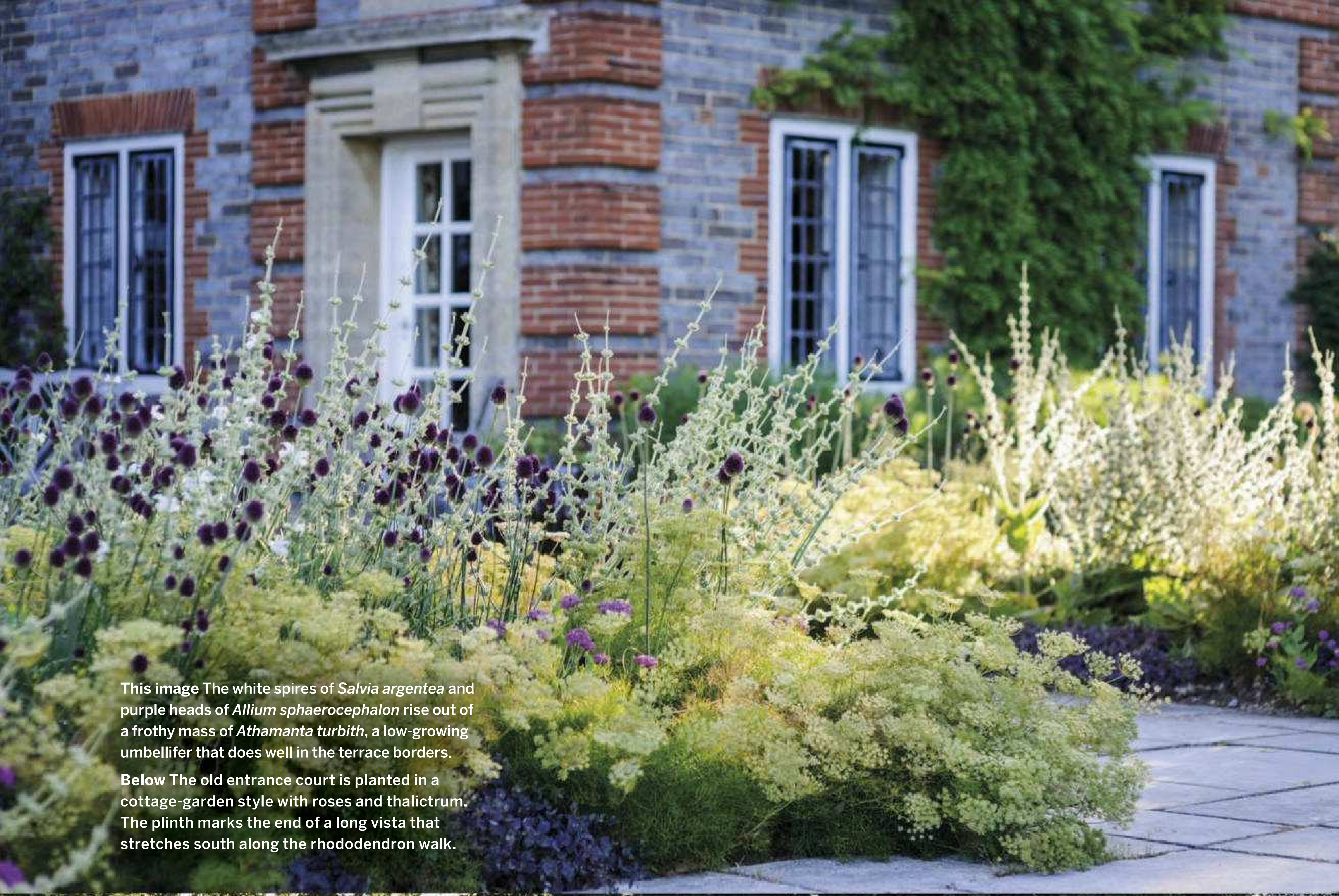
Dan worked at Folly Farm for an unusually long period. Looking back, what does he most remember from his time there? "The depth of my involvement," he replies. "Making connections. The opportunity to change the pace. Above all, an incredible sense of excitement." □

Turn the page to see Dan's replanting of Folly Farm's historic core and find out about the new areas he has added in the third part of our series in the December issue.

TO MAINTAIN DAN'S VISION THE TEAM OF GARDENERS NEED TO DO SOME CAREFUL REFEREEING

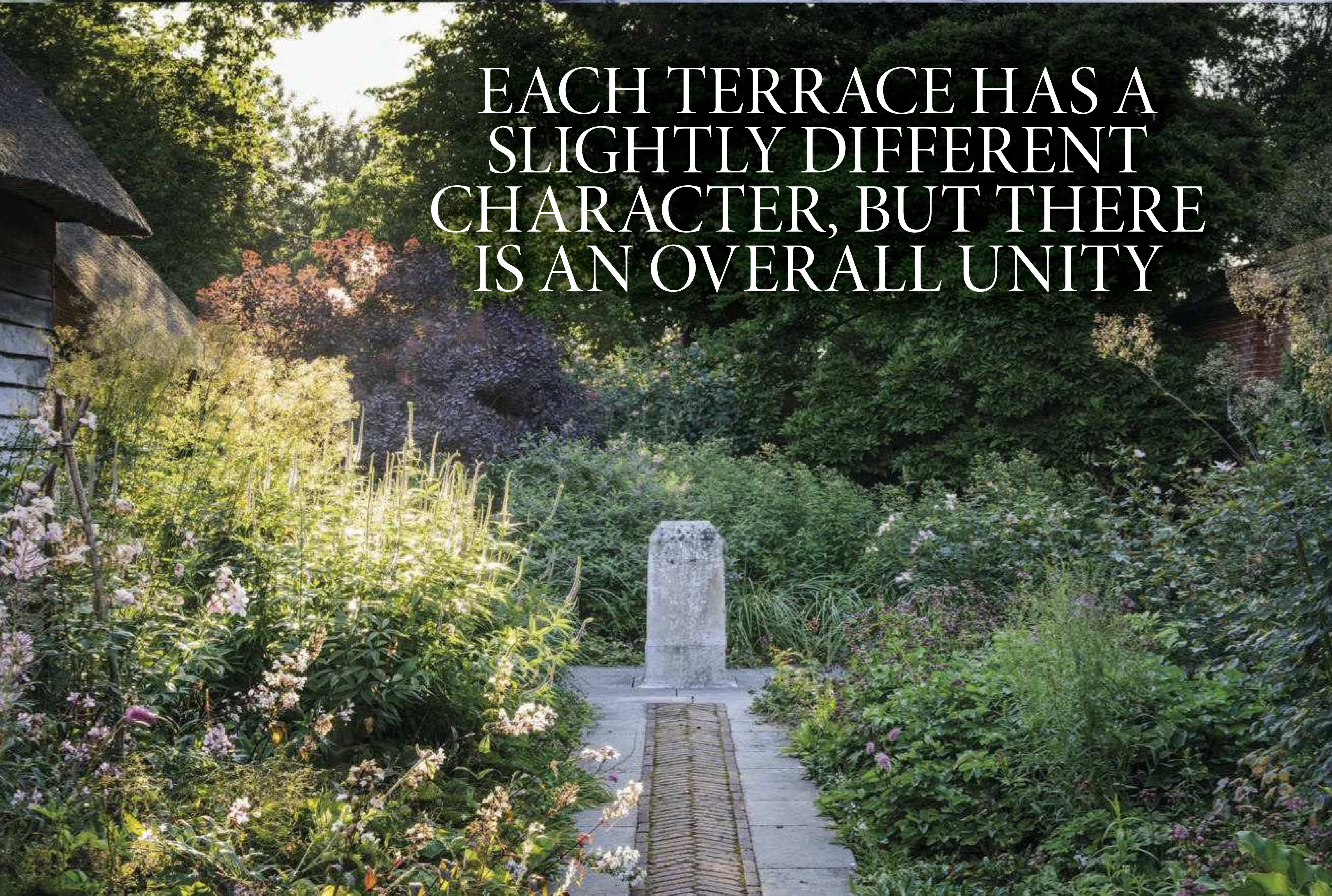


By late summer, grasses dominate the new Wind Garden, with the seedheads of *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah' and *P. virgatum* 'Rehbraun' swaying between bold clumps of dogwood. The cultivar Dan has chosen, *Cornus alba* 'Kesselringii', is particularly eye-catching in autumn, with leaves that turn rich shades of purple and red.

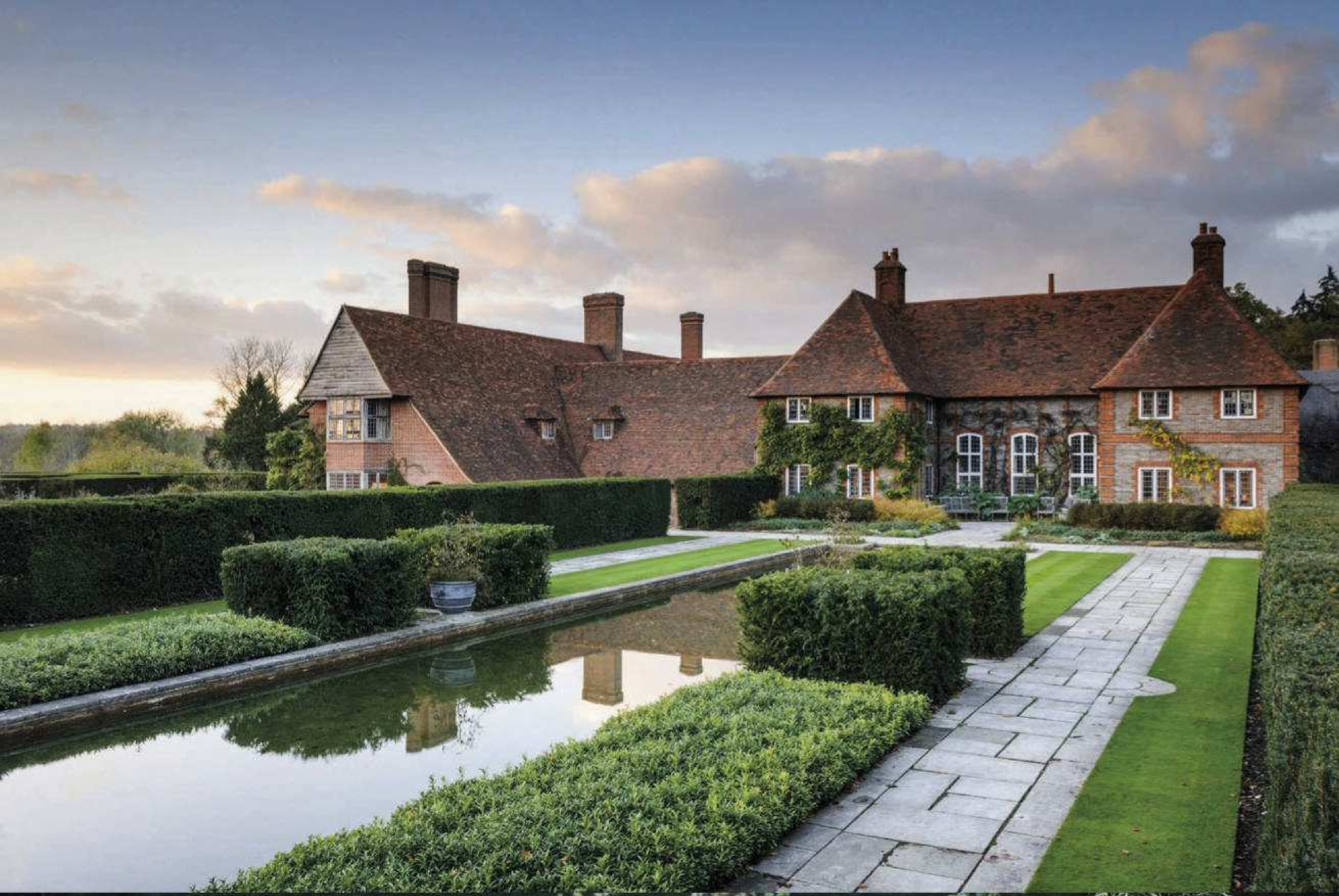


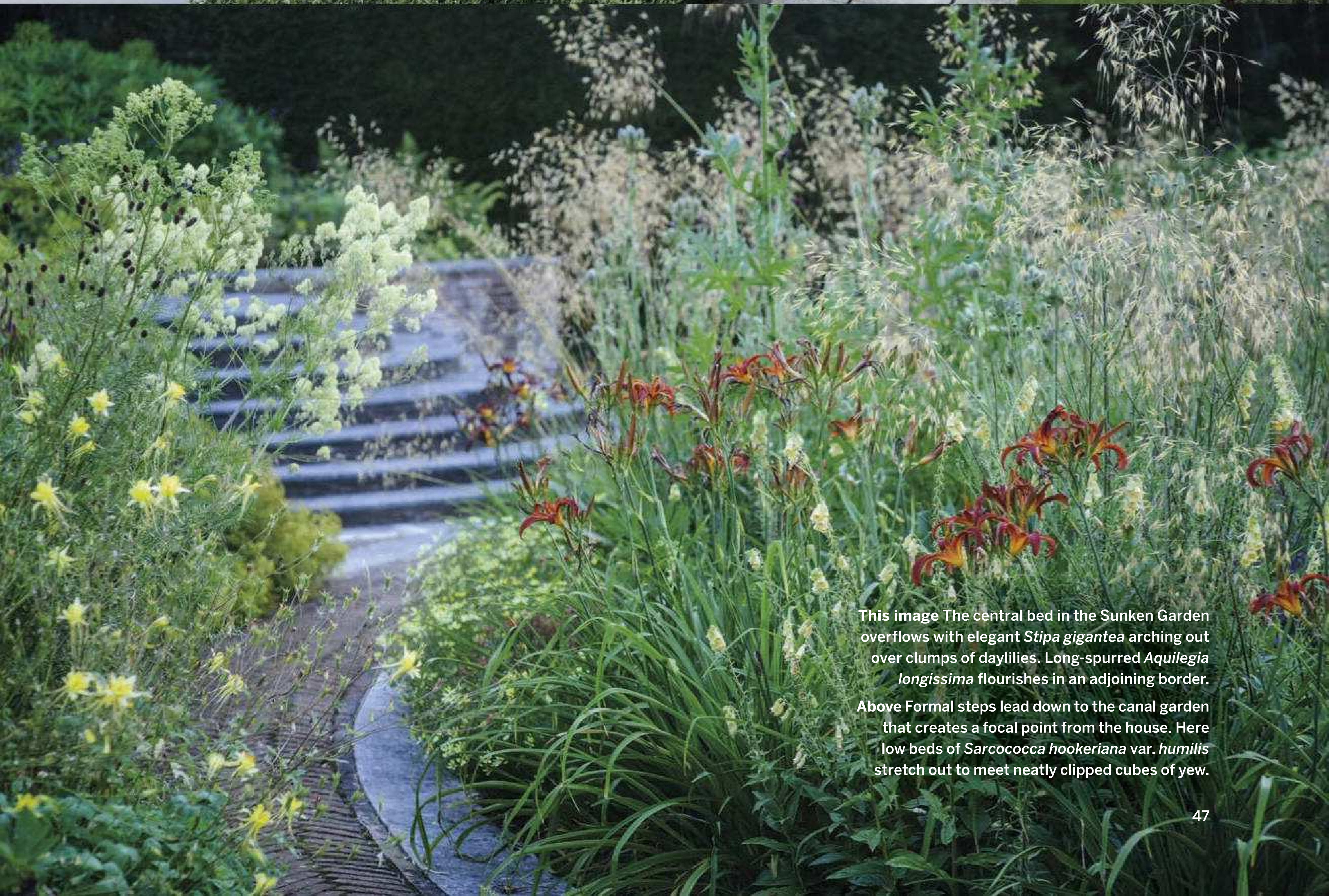
This image The white spires of *Salvia argentea* and purple heads of *Allium sphaerocephalon* rise out of a frothy mass of *Athamanta turbith*, a low-growing umbellifer that does well in the terrace borders.

Below The old entrance court is planted in a cottage-garden style with roses and thalictrum. The plinth marks the end of a long vista that stretches south along the rhododendron walk.



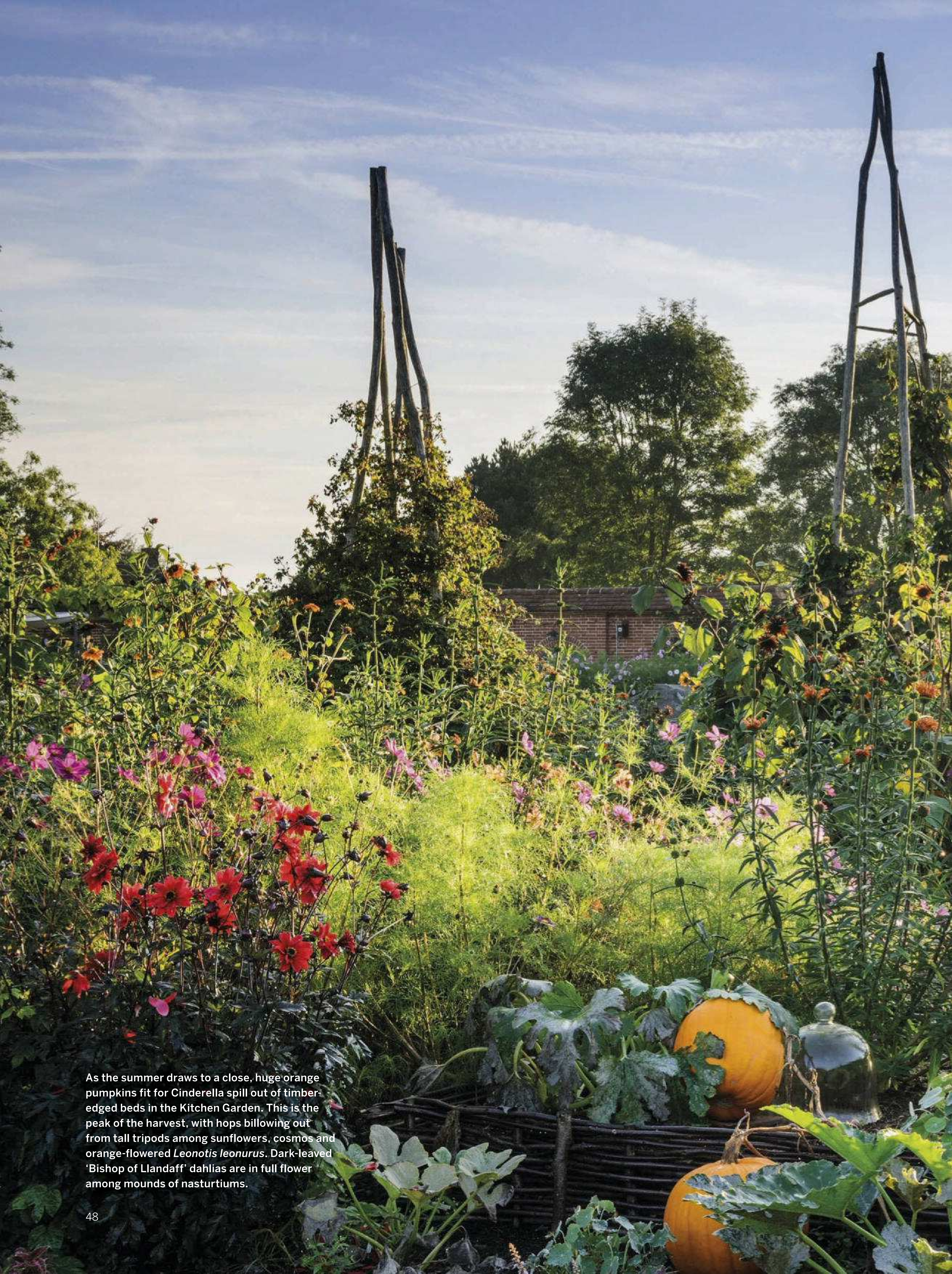
EACH TERRACE HAS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT CHARACTER, BUT THERE IS AN OVERALL UNITY





This image The central bed in the Sunken Garden overflows with elegant *Stipa gigantea* arching out over clumps of daylilies. Long-spurred *Aquilegia longissima* flourishes in an adjoining border.

Above Formal steps lead down to the canal garden that creates a focal point from the house. Here low beds of *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* stretch out to meet neatly clipped cubes of yew.



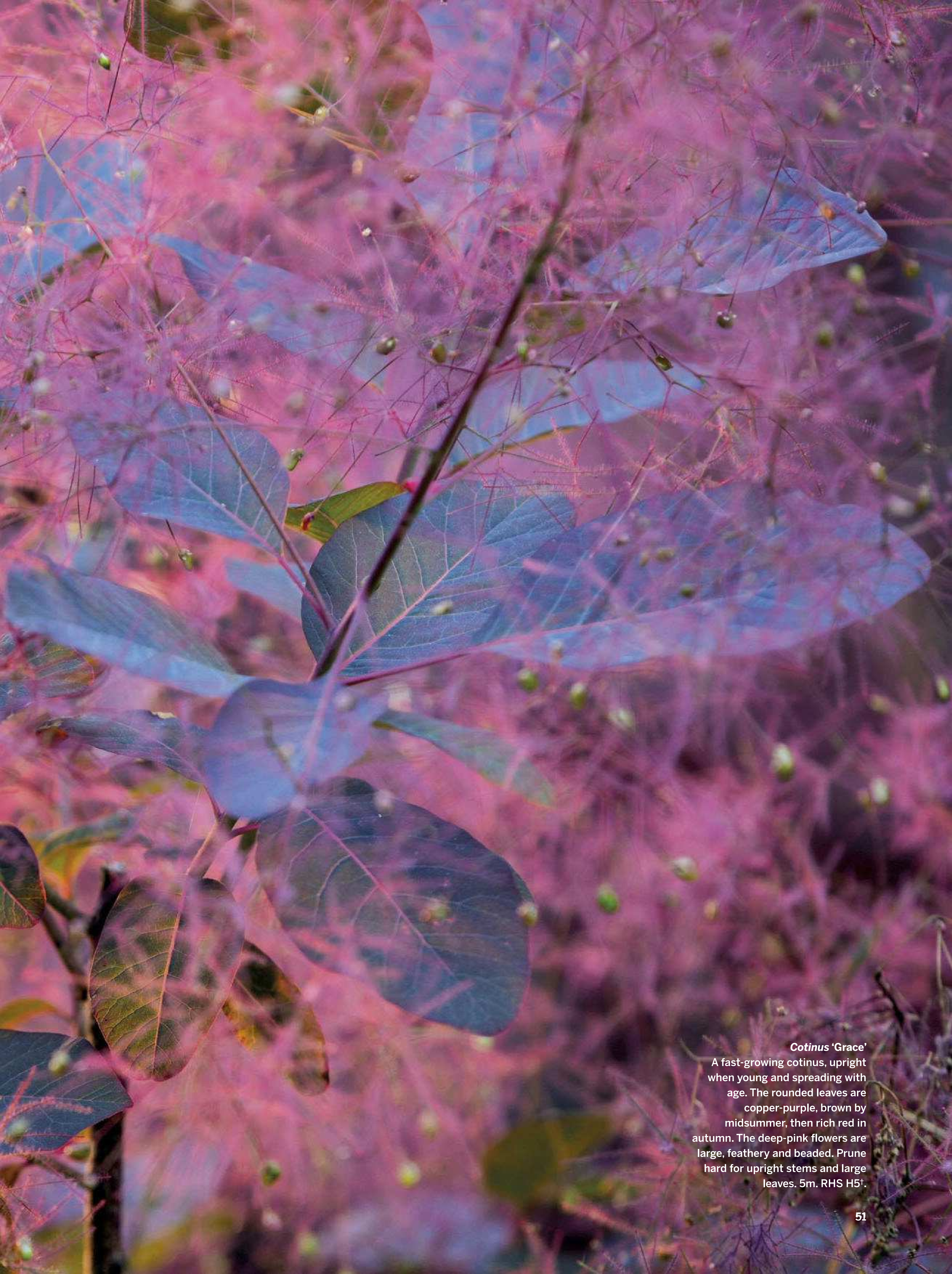
As the summer draws to a close, huge orange pumpkins fit for Cinderella spill out of timber-edged beds in the Kitchen Garden. This is the peak of the harvest, with hops billowing out from tall tripods among sunflowers, cosmos and orange-flowered *Leonotis leonurus*. Dark-leaved 'Bishop of Llandaff' dahlias are in full flower among mounds of nasturtiums.

THE WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN IS ANOTHER STUPENDOUS SUMMER HIGHLIGHT. IN SHORT, IT IS HEAVEN ON EARTH

COTINUS

Bold autumn tints and early plumes of flower make the smoke bush an indispensable shrub in the garden

WORDS **ANDY McINDOE** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



***Cotinus* 'Grace'**
A fast-growing cotinus, upright when young and spreading with age. The rounded leaves are copper-purple, brown by midsummer, then rich red in autumn. The deep-pink flowers are large, feathery and beaded. Prune hard for upright stems and large leaves. 5m. RHS H5[†].

In old gardening books you will find them referred to as *Rhus cotinus*; in fact the species *Cotinus coggygria* is sometimes called Venetian sumac, endorsing its association with the genus. Now separated from rhus, cotinus stands alone as the genus of a handful of species, the cultivars of which include some of our finest foliage shrubs.

Disc-like leaves clothe the flexible young stems in a whorled arrangement – quite different from most other shrubs. Older plants assume a mounded, billowing appearance, even before they erupt in a cloud of smoke in midsummer as the fine, feathery, flower plumes unfurl.

To most gardeners, cotinus is synonymous with purple foliage, the plum-leaved forms being the most widely planted. The green-leaved smoke bushes are equally impressive, however, their soft leaves contrasting in colour and texture with evergreens and plants with typically formed foliage. Many of these excel when it comes to autumn colour.

Some cotinus are extremely strong growing, none more so than the beautiful *Cotinus* 'Grace'. When I first worked at Hillier Nurseries, in the late 1970s, propagator Peter Dummer was hybridising cotinus. He crossed the rare *Cotinus obovatus*, a species renowned for autumn colour, with *Cotinus coggygria* 'Velvet Cloak'. This resulted in five seedlings, the so-called Dummer hybrids, one of which was named *Cotinus* 'Grace' after the propagator's wife.

A magnificent foliage shrub, 'Grace' has large, rounded coppery-purple leaves on strong ascending stems, especially when pruned hard. The large, feathery, deep-pink flower clusters and magnificent autumn tints have assured its position as an enduring garden favourite.

Hillier was also responsible for the UK introduction and promotion of *Cotinus coggygria* Golden Spirit (= 'Ancot'), one of the few yellow-leaved forms. Originally raised in the Netherlands, it has not proved to be as popular as it deserves to be. The soft golden-yellow leaves are never brash and assume attractive lime tones when they are partially shaded; neither do they scorch, as long as the soil is reasonably moist. Coral-coloured flower plumes make an interesting addition in summer. I have a large specimen planted with *Prunus maackii* 'Amber Beauty', the golden-brown of the latter's bark picking up on the hue of the former's smoky flowers. I would love to say this was planned, but it was in fact a happy accident, and a combination I have since repeated elsewhere.

Large cotinus are often found planted as specimens in older gardens. I am always in awe of their resilience and ability to regenerate. In a parkland setting I once found two ancient plants, one green and one purple, that had long toppled over. The only sensible way to deal with them was to cut them off, leaving stumps of around 60cm. Not to be beaten, they soon produced strong new shoots carrying healthy foliage, and I have no doubt that they will once again attain substantial proportions.

The potential size and vigour of most cotinus varieties makes them unsuitable for most small gardens. Added to this, they are rarely arresting as young plants, which limits their sales in garden centres. *Cotinus coggygria* 'Young Lady' is one of the exceptions, despite its plain green leaves. Compact in habit, it is irresistible when smothered in fuzzy plumes of pink flowers. It reminds me of a well-groomed poodle.

When it comes to selecting a shrub with more than one season of interest, a cotinus is a good choice. It has fine foliage throughout the season, even if it is a little late to break into leaf. It has the benefit of long-lasting, interesting and often spectacular summer flowers. After that comes its finest moment: the show of stunning autumn colour. Although the smoke bush is rarely the first shrub I choose for a planting scheme, it should be, and I am duly chastened. It is the ideal foundation of good planting: foliage always come first. ❑

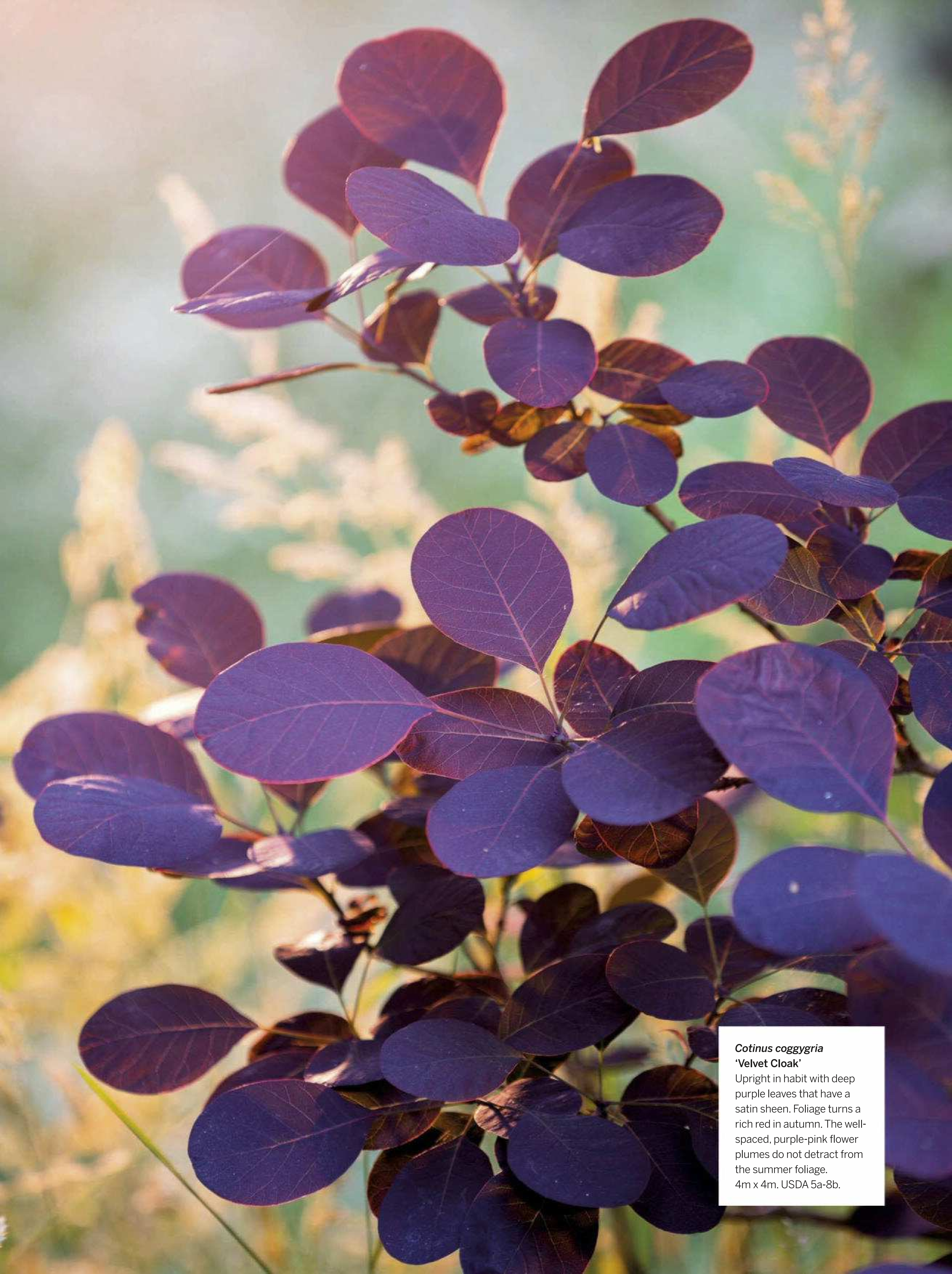
• Author Andy McIndoe is a writer, broadcaster and horticulturist.
His recommendations for the best cotinus can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

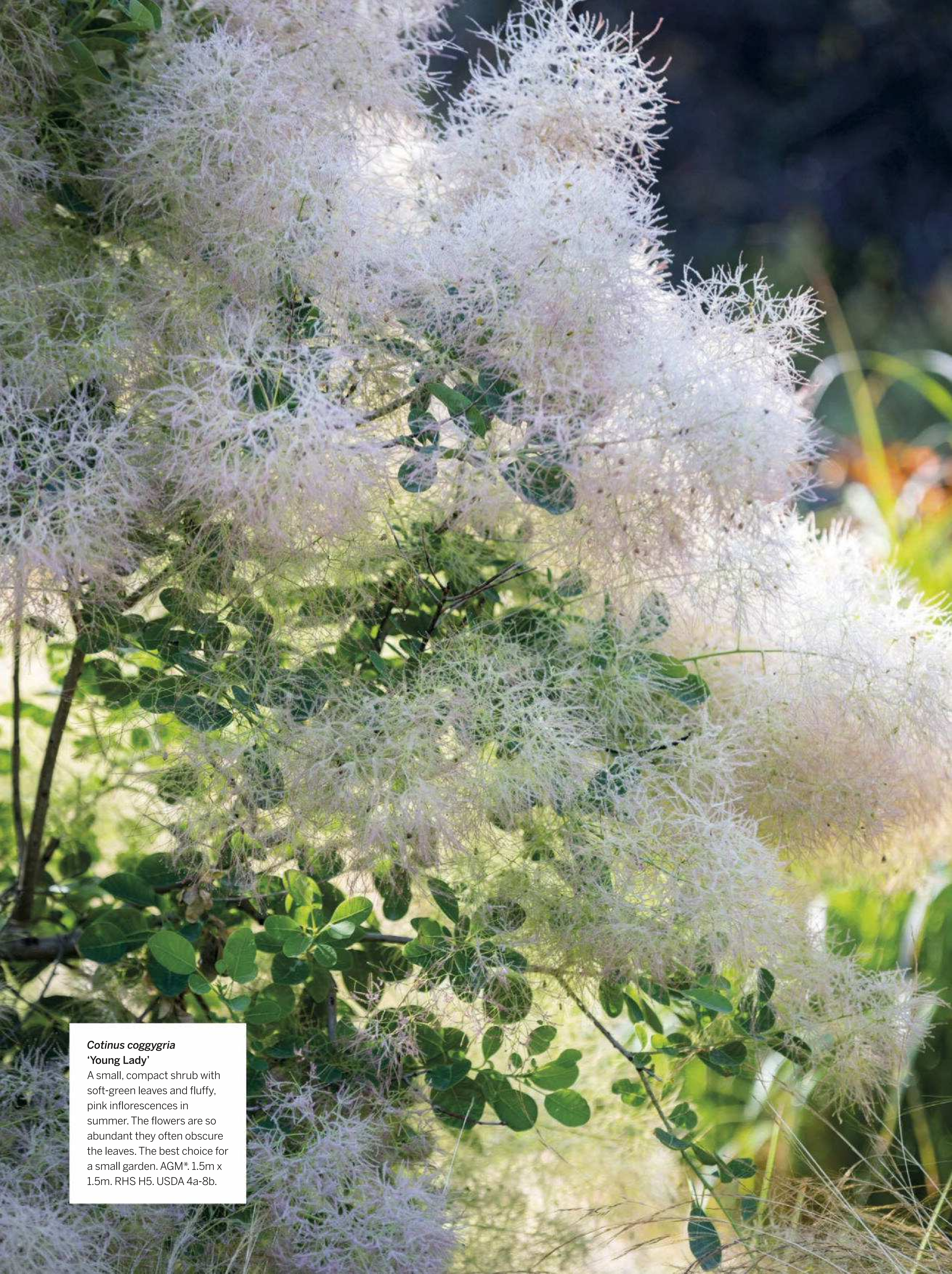
What Large, hardy, summer-flowering, deciduous shrubs with attractive, rounded green, purple or gold leaves and feathery flower plumes. Its common name of smoke bush or smoke tree is inspired by the wispy character of its flowers.
Origins Three species from Europe and Asia, southeast USA and southwest China.
Season The abundant summer foliage often colours brilliantly in autumn. The fine, feathery, flower plumes remain attractive for many weeks from midsummer through to autumn.
Size The smaller cultivars grow to 1.2m in height and spread, while larger ones can reach 4-8m in height and spread.
Conditions Full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil. Reasonably tolerant of exposed sites.
Hardiness Most are hardy throughout the UK even in cold winters and have an RHS hardiness rating of H5 (hardy to -15ºC). They're suitable for gardens in USDA zones 4a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

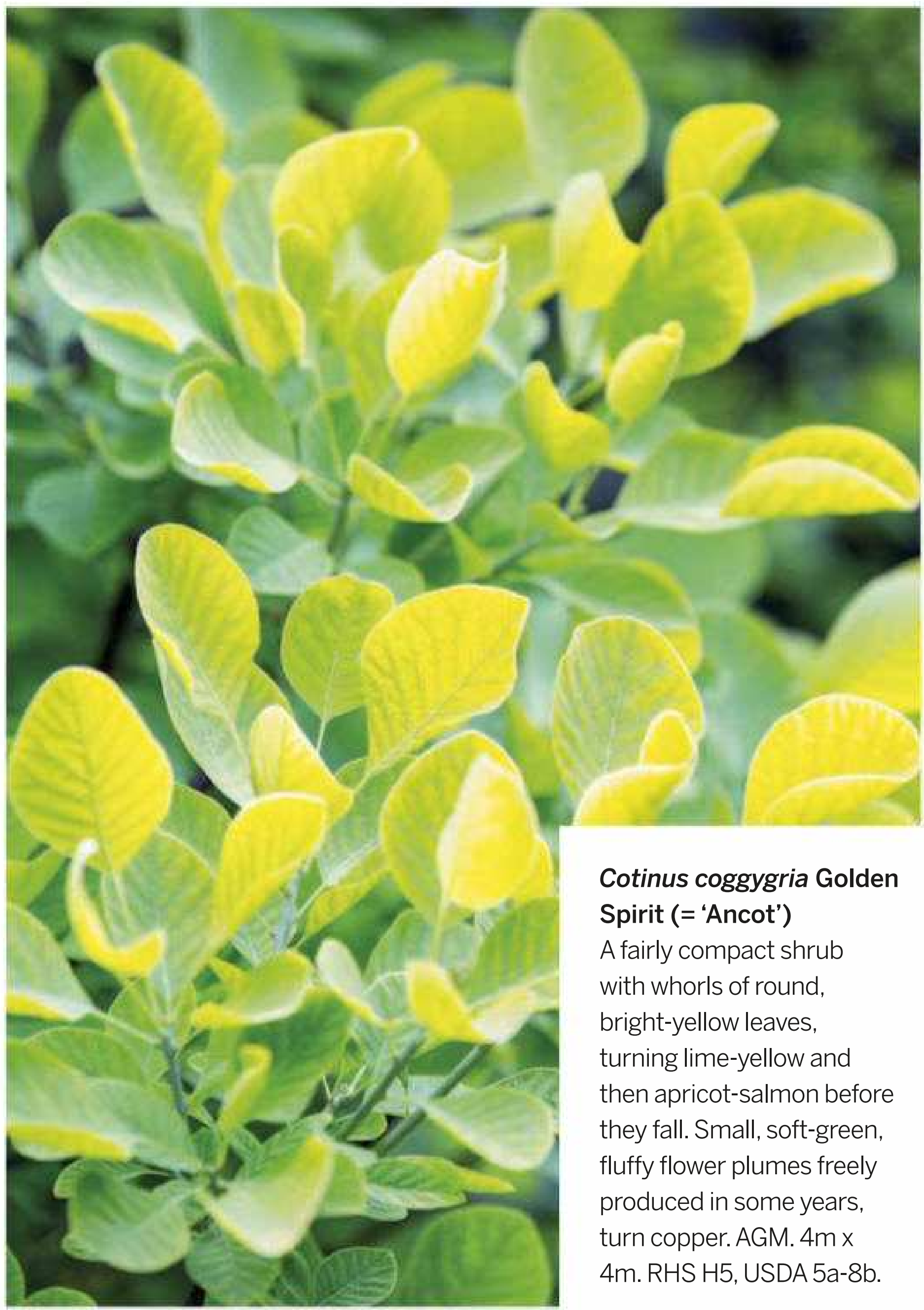
Thorp Perrow Gardens and Arboretum
Most of the cotinus images for this month's plant profile were taken at Thorp Perrow in North Yorkshire. Covering 100 acres, the arboretum boasts one of the largest collections of shrubs and trees in the north of England, including the national collections of ash, lime, laburnum, walnut and cotinus. Many of the plants found in the arboretum are on sale in the garden centre.
thorpperrow.com



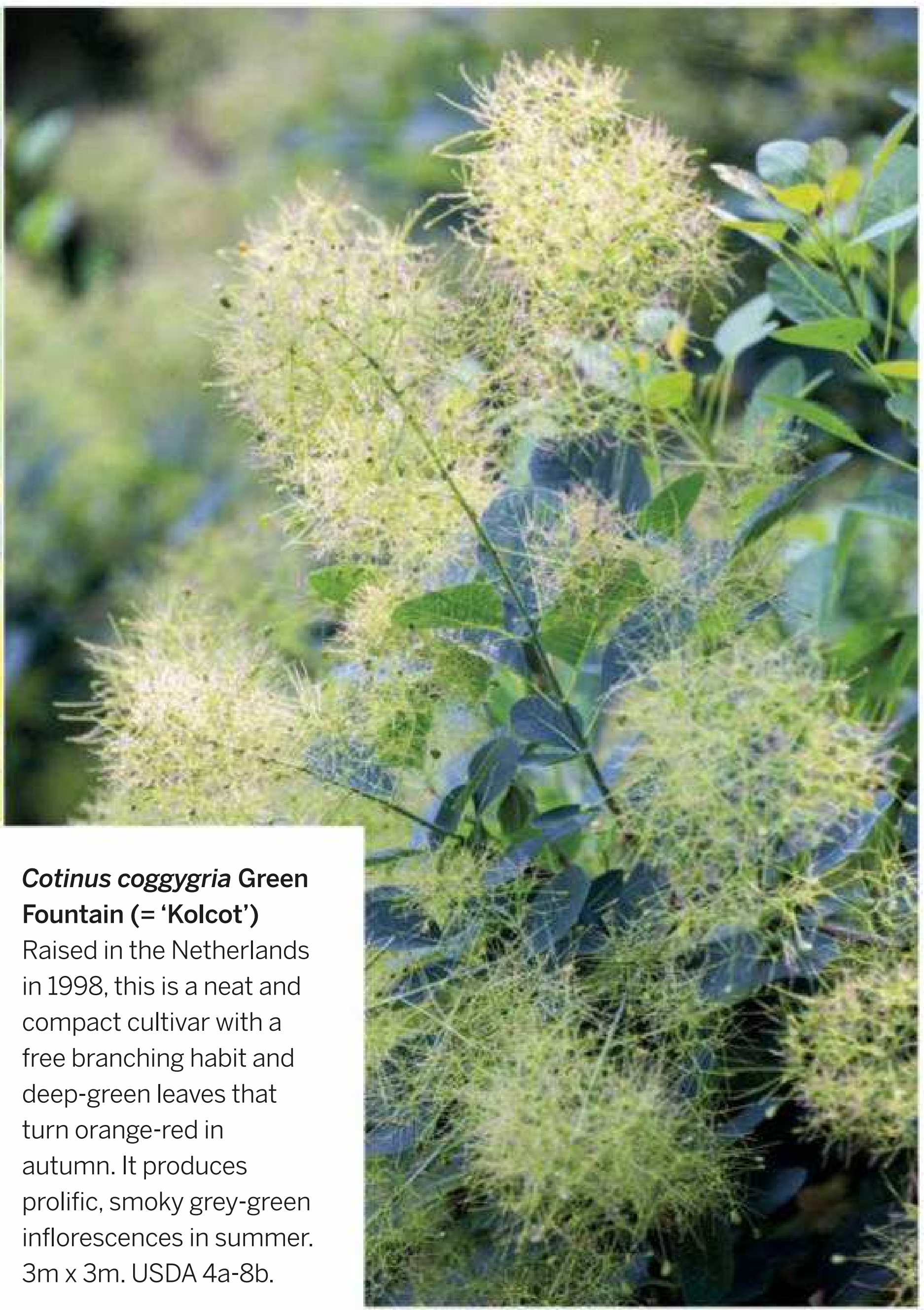
Cotinus coggygria
'Velvet Cloak'
Upright in habit with deep purple leaves that have a satin sheen. Foliage turns a rich red in autumn. The well-spaced, purple-pink flower plumes do not detract from the summer foliage.
4m x 4m. USDA 5a-8b.



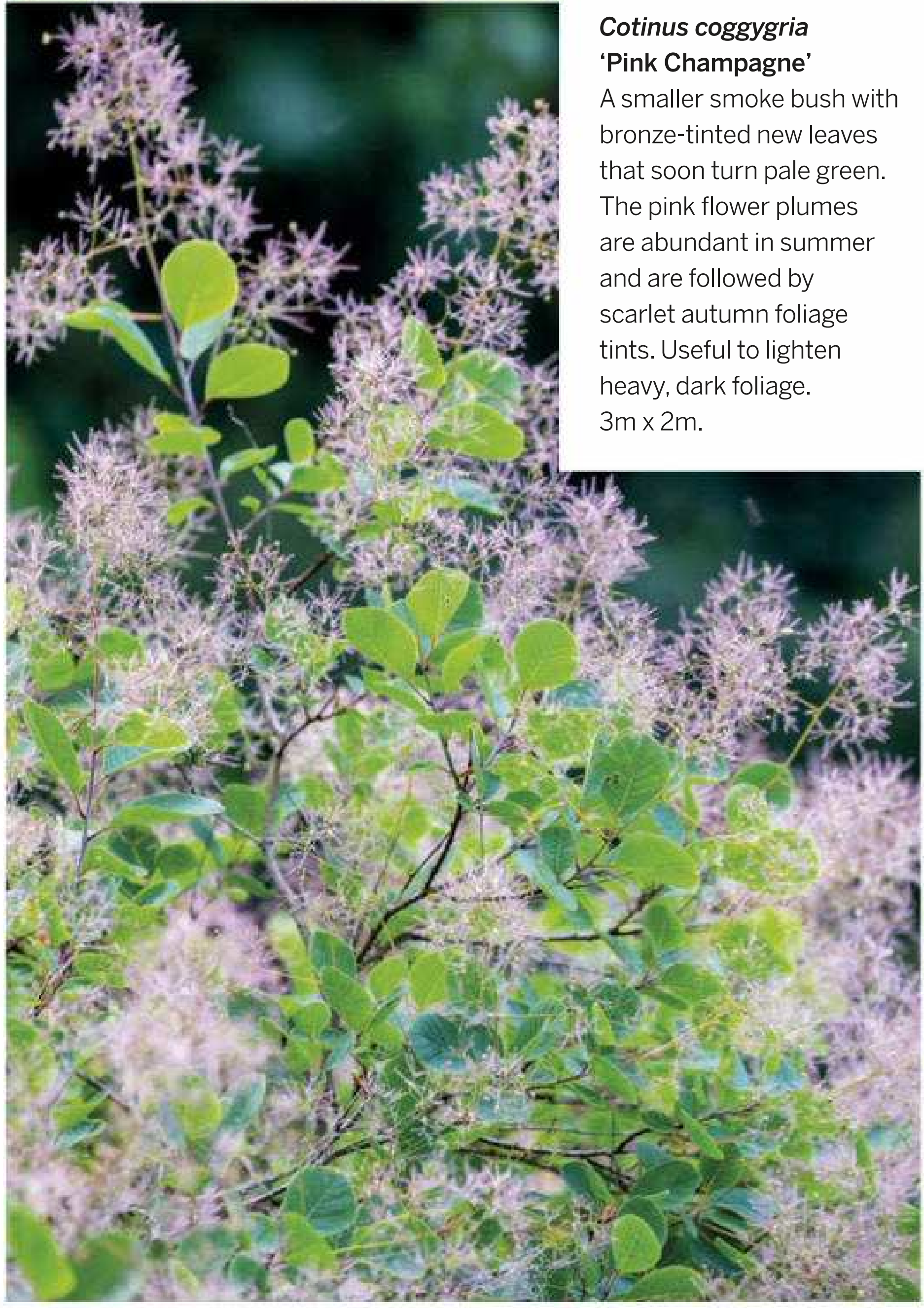
***Cotinus coggygria* 'Young Lady'**
A small, compact shrub with soft-green leaves and fluffy, pink inflorescences in summer. The flowers are so abundant they often obscure the leaves. The best choice for a small garden. AGM*. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H5. USDA 4a-8b.



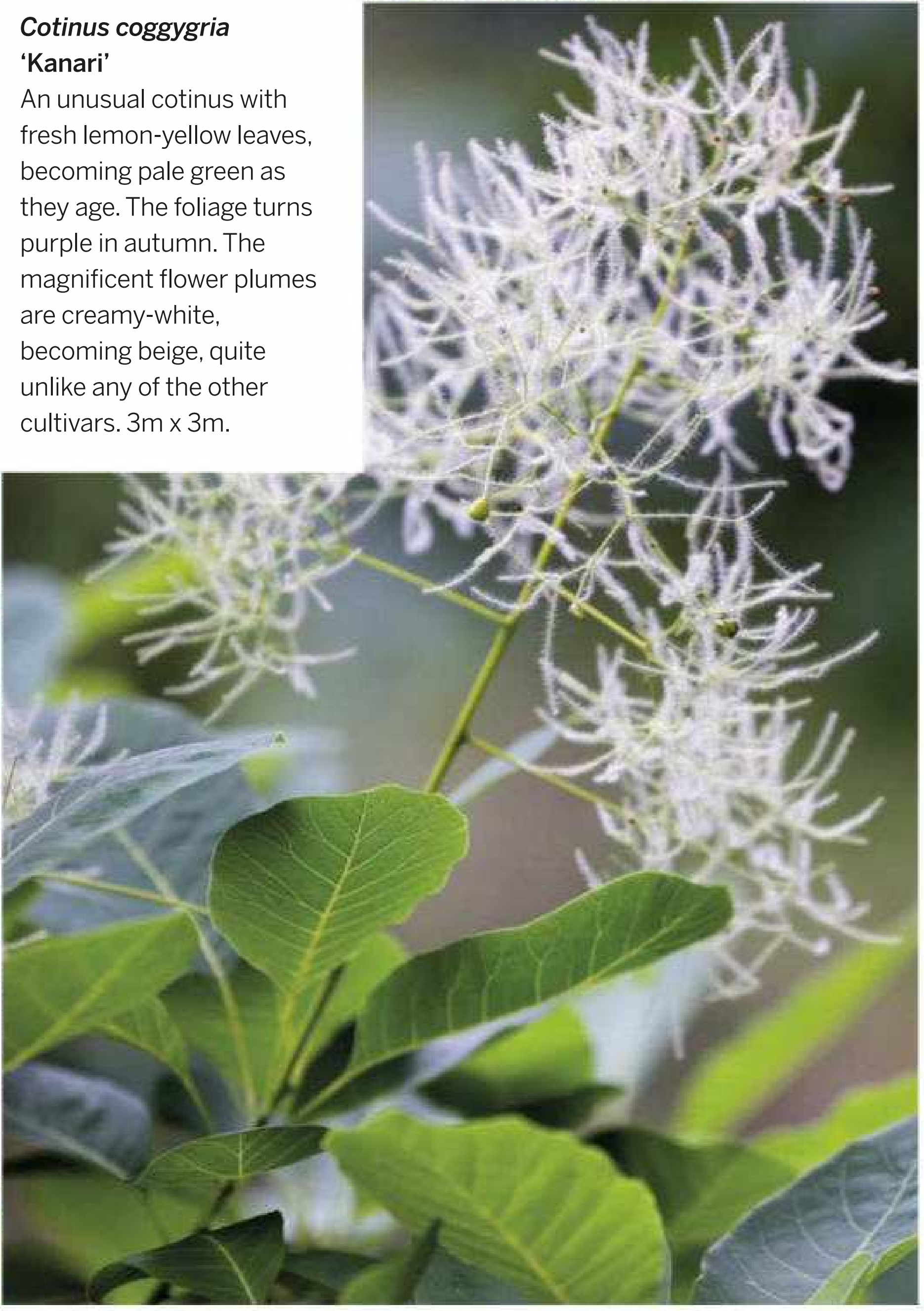
***Cotinus coggygria* Golden Spirit (= 'Ancot')**
A fairly compact shrub with whorls of round, bright-yellow leaves, turning lime-yellow and then apricot-salmon before they fall. Small, soft-green, fluffy flower plumes freely produced in some years, turn copper. AGM. 4m x 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



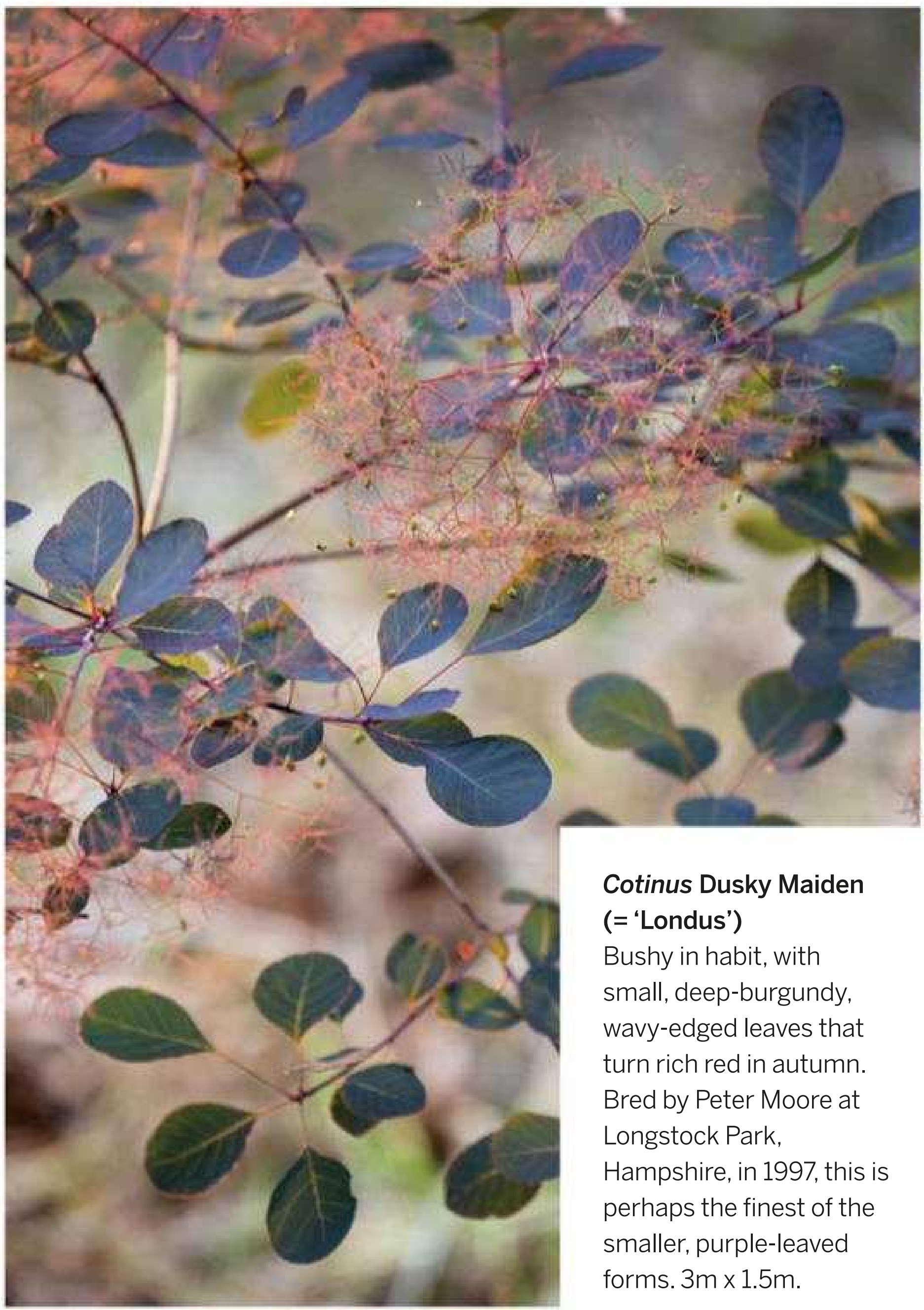
***Cotinus coggygria* Green Fountain (= 'Kolcot')**
Raised in the Netherlands in 1998, this is a neat and compact cultivar with a free branching habit and deep-green leaves that turn orange-red in autumn. It produces prolific, smoky grey-green inflorescences in summer. 3m x 3m. USDA 4a-8b.

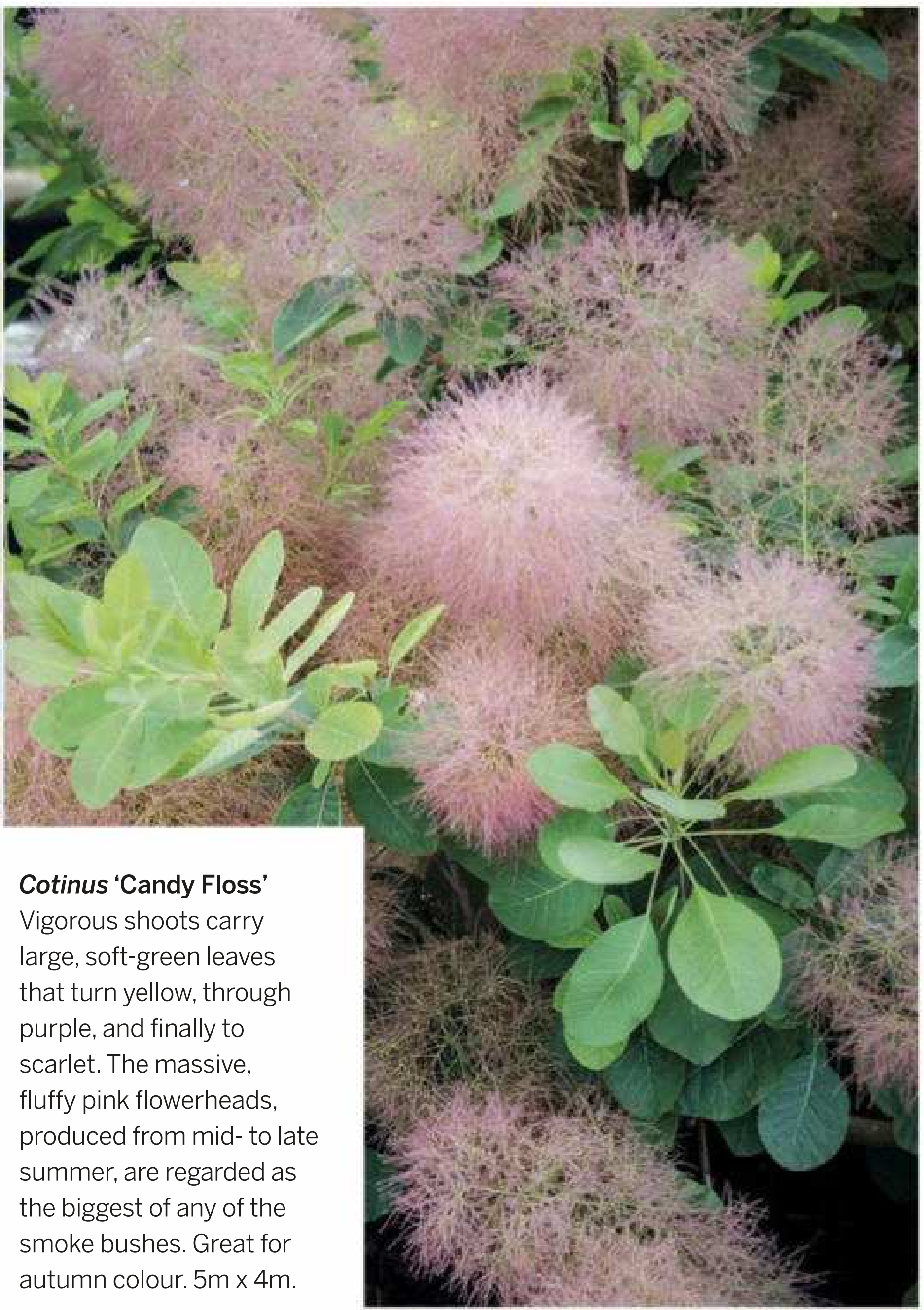


***Cotinus coggygria* 'Pink Champagne'**
A smaller smoke bush with bronze-tinted new leaves that soon turn pale green. The pink flower plumes are abundant in summer and are followed by scarlet autumn foliage tints. Useful to lighten heavy, dark foliage. 3m x 2m.



***Cotinus coggygria* 'Kanari'**
An unusual cotinus with fresh lemon-yellow leaves, becoming pale green as they age. The foliage turns purple in autumn. The magnificent flower plumes are creamy-white, becoming beige, quite unlike any of the other cultivars. 3m x 3m.



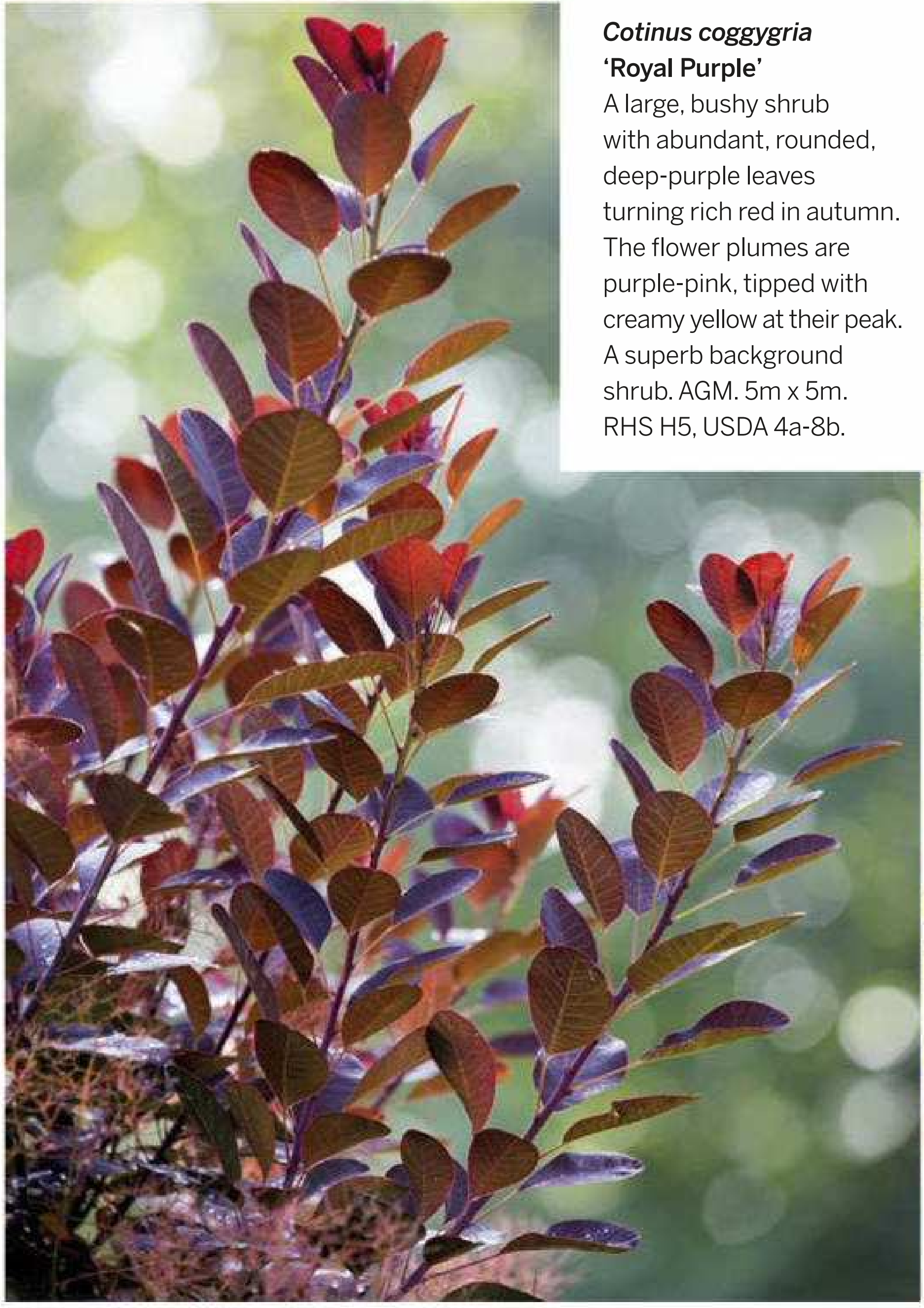


Cotinus Dusky Maiden (= 'Londus')
Bushy in habit, with small, deep-burgundy, wavy-edged leaves that turn rich red in autumn. Bred by Peter Moore at Longstock Park, Hampshire, in 1997, this is perhaps the finest of the smaller, purple-leaved forms. 3m x 1.5m.

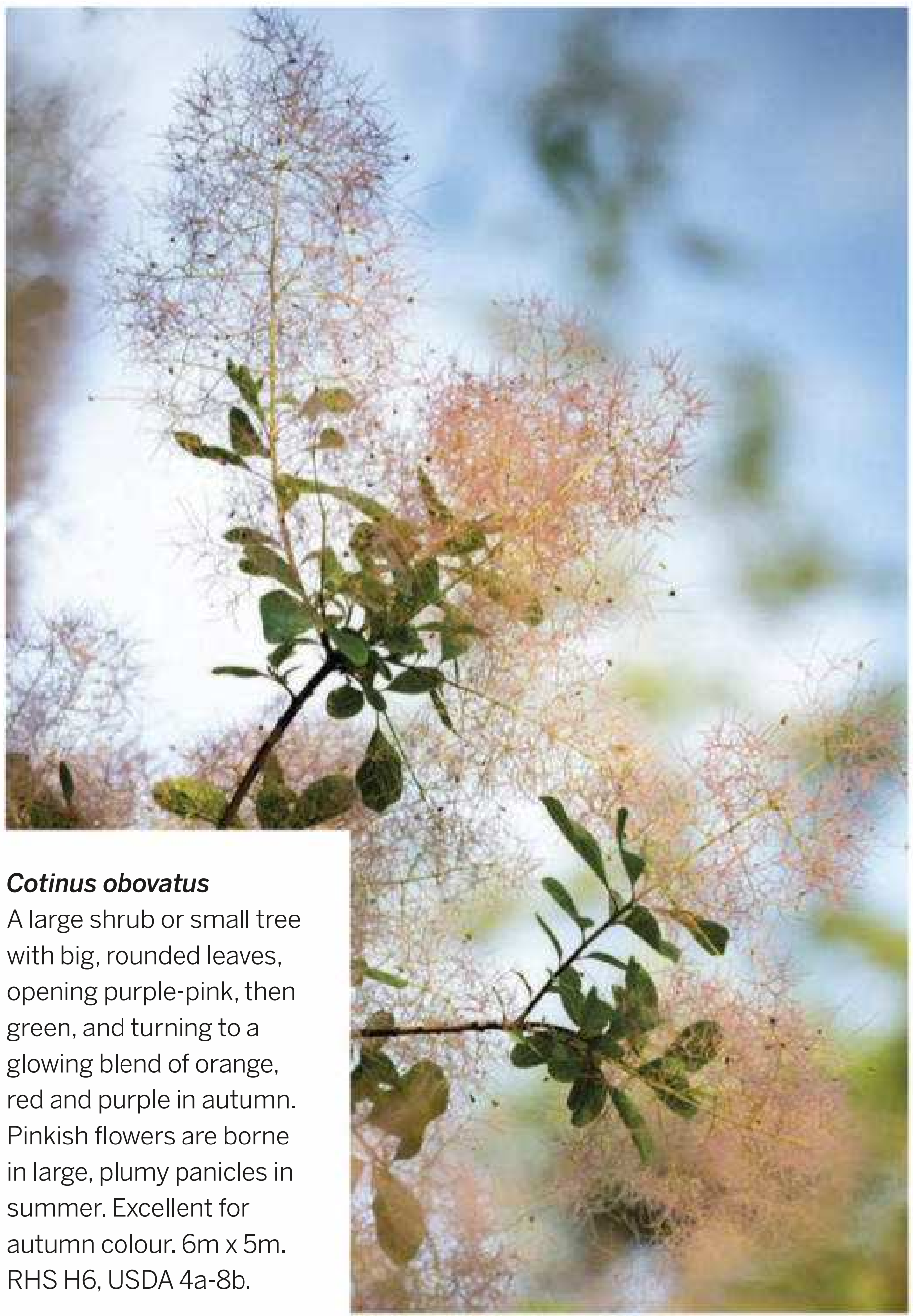
Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple'
A large, bushy shrub with abundant, rounded, deep-purple leaves turning rich red in autumn. The flower plumes are purple-pink, tipped with creamy yellow at their peak. A superb background shrub. AGM. 5m x 5m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Cotinus 'Candy Floss'
Vigorous shoots carry large, soft-green leaves that turn yellow, through purple, and finally to scarlet. The massive, fluffy pink flowerheads, produced from mid- to late summer, are regarded as the biggest of any of the smoke bushes. Great for autumn colour. 5m x 4m.

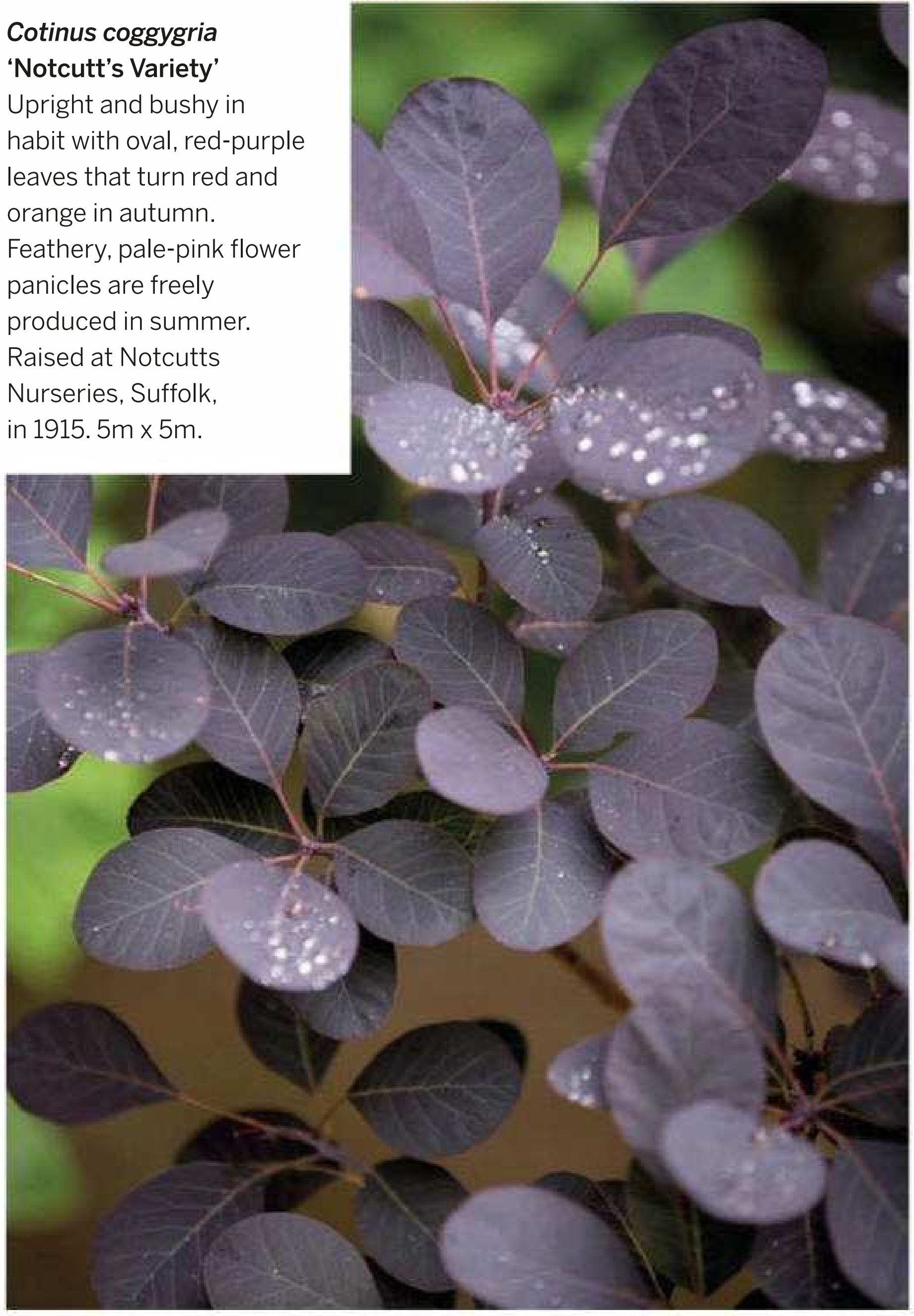
Cotinus 'Flame'
A vigorous cultivar with comparatively large, oval green leaves that colour a brilliant red and orange in autumn. The large, feathery pink flower plumes are a bonus. Good as a free-standing specimen against dark evergreens. AGM. 6m x 4m. RHS H5.



HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS; VICTORIA FIRMSTON / GAP PHOTOS



Cotinus obovatus
A large shrub or small tree with big, rounded leaves, opening purple-pink, then green, and turning to a glowing blend of orange, red and purple in autumn. Pinkish flowers are borne in large, plumy panicles in summer. Excellent for autumn colour. 6m x 5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.



***Cotinus coggygria* 'Notcutt's Variety'**
Upright and bushy in habit with oval, red-purple leaves that turn red and orange in autumn. Feathery, pale-pink flower panicles are freely produced in summer. Raised at Notcutts Nurseries, Suffolk, in 1915. 5m x 5m.

Cultivation

Cotinus are very hardy, and tolerant of cold winters and some exposure to wind. They are easy to grow, thriving on most soils that are not too dry. Reasonably moist, fertile ground results in vigorous plants and good foliage, although more intense leaf colour often occurs in drier conditions. They thrive on clay and are a good choice for new-build gardens where space allows.

They will grow in partial shade, but foliage colour is always at its best in an open, sunny position, especially when it comes to the purple-leaved forms. In shade, these take on brown tints, while the golden-leaved forms turn lime-green. Too much shade results in few flowers and often more leggy growth.

Plant out container-grown shrubs during cooler, wetter months. Prepare the ground thoroughly, incorporating plenty of garden compost or a shrub- and tree-planting medium. As cotinus can be slow to get going, it may be worth investing in a larger specimen than standard garden centre stock.

Many cotinus are vigorous, producing extensive shoots in the growing season. Left unpruned, these branches can be long and sprawling. Hard pruning in winter promotes upright shoots and improved foliage size, albeit at the expense of flowers. The showy summer inflorescences are produced on two- to three-year-old wood, so keep regular pruning to a minimum if you want to encourage the flowers and prune hard every few years to reinvigorate the shrub. As newly planted cotinus take a while to establish, prune hard in the early stage for vigorous growth and a more substantial branch framework.

Few other shrubs have the foliage impact of smoke bushes. The large, purple-leaved forms make wonderful background shrubs in large beds and borders. They add depth to a planting scheme and make a striking contrast to silver or golden leaves. *C. coggygria* 'Royal Purple' is at its best against the silver willow-like leaves of *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver', and is also effective with green and white variegations. *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica Variegata', planted in the foreground, contrasts through summer and then mellows as purple-pink tints spread through the sage and white leaves in late summer.

Cotinus are particularly valuable when planted with large evergreen shrubs. They transform planting in summer, and reinvent it in autumn. The evergreens play their part with their presence through winter. The gold-and-green variegated holly *Ilex* x *altaclarensis* 'Golden King' shines alongside the soft, lustrous purple leaves of *C. coggygria* 'Velvet Cloak'. This could be underplanted with *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald 'n' Gold'.

Where to see and buy

- **Ashwood Nurseries**
  Ashwood Lower Lane,
  Ashwood, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 0AE.
  Tel 01384 401996,
  ashwoodnurseries.com
- **Barcham Trees**
  Eye Hill Drove, Soham, Ely,
  Cambridgeshire CB7 5XF.
  Tel 01353 720950,
  barcham.co.uk
- **The Bath Priory**
  Weston Road, Bath BA1 2XT.
  Tel 01225 331922,
  thebathpriory.co.uk
- **Sir Harold Hillier Gardens**
  Jermyns Lane, Ampfield,
  Hampshire SO51 0QA.
  Tel 01794 369318,
  hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hilliergardens
- **Larch Cottage Nurseries**
  Melkinthorpe, Penrith,
  Cumbria CA10 2DR.
  Tel 01931 712404,
  larchcottage.co.uk
- **Thorp Perrow Arboretum**
  Bedale, North
  Yorkshire DL8 2PS.
  Tel 01677 425323,
  thorpperrow.com
- **RHS Wisley Plant Centre**
  RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking,
  Surrey GU23 6QB.
  Tel 01483 211113,
  rhs.org.uk/wisleyplantcentre

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

STEPHEN CRISP

The man in charge of central London's second largest private garden (after Buckingham Palace), on sustainability, his passion for collecting art and his flair for floristry

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

When Stephen Crisp took up the job of head gardener at Winfield House, the private residence of the US ambassador in London's Regent's Park, he knew he wanted to improve the 12.5-acre garden. What he had found on his first visit to London's second largest private garden was a 19th-century landscape, with borrowed views of Regent's Park, overlaid with a revived 1930s' garden that had been added to in the intervening years. It was, he says frankly, "frayed round the edges and lacking in vision." Aged 27, and fresh from a five-year post as head horticulturist at Leeds Castle, Stephen set out to make it one of the best private gardens in central London. Thirty years later, with the garden featured on the covers of two recent books, he feels he's got there.

His position as head gardener is unique in that his boss changes every four years. "I've always tried to be the fixed point," he explains. "I run the garden for the long term, and treat it spiritually as if it's mine, but actually I'm just a custodian." Although it's a home to successive ambassadors Winfield also functions as a venue for high-level meetings and lavish events. Stephen spent his first six months observing the garden, and decided it should be managed not as a collection of plants or themes but like a private estate that follows the spirit of the lightly wooded 19th-century landscape envisioned by Regent's Park's architect John Nash. Making it environmentally sustainable was a priority, and Stephen proudly declares that he and his team of two recycle every scrap of green waste on site, use pesticides minimally, mulch vigorously and create a variety of habitats for wildlife, including dead tree trunks for woodpeckers and bats. The approach to the house needed to make a bigger, more elegant statement so out came the paved driveway and the 29 x *Cuprocyparis leylandii* that were obscuring the long windows. Today's visitors see a restful combination of *Magnolia grandiflora* trees, clipped box and green planters filled with seasonal blooms.

> I RUN THE GARDEN FOR THE LONG TERM, AND TREAT IT SPIRITUALLY AS IF IT'S MINE, BUT I'M JUST A CUSTODIAN

For Stephen sustainability also means managing resources. "There is no point in developing a landscape if you can't then maintain it," he says. His scheme for the Summer Garden, the tired rose garden originally laid out in 1983, is a graphic arrangement of grasses, shrubs and perennials, with a canopy of square-clipped olive trees, that needs half the maintenance. Interestingly, there are few rare or unusual plants in the garden – he considers the breeding of echinaceas in shades of yellow and orange, for example, to be plain ridiculous.

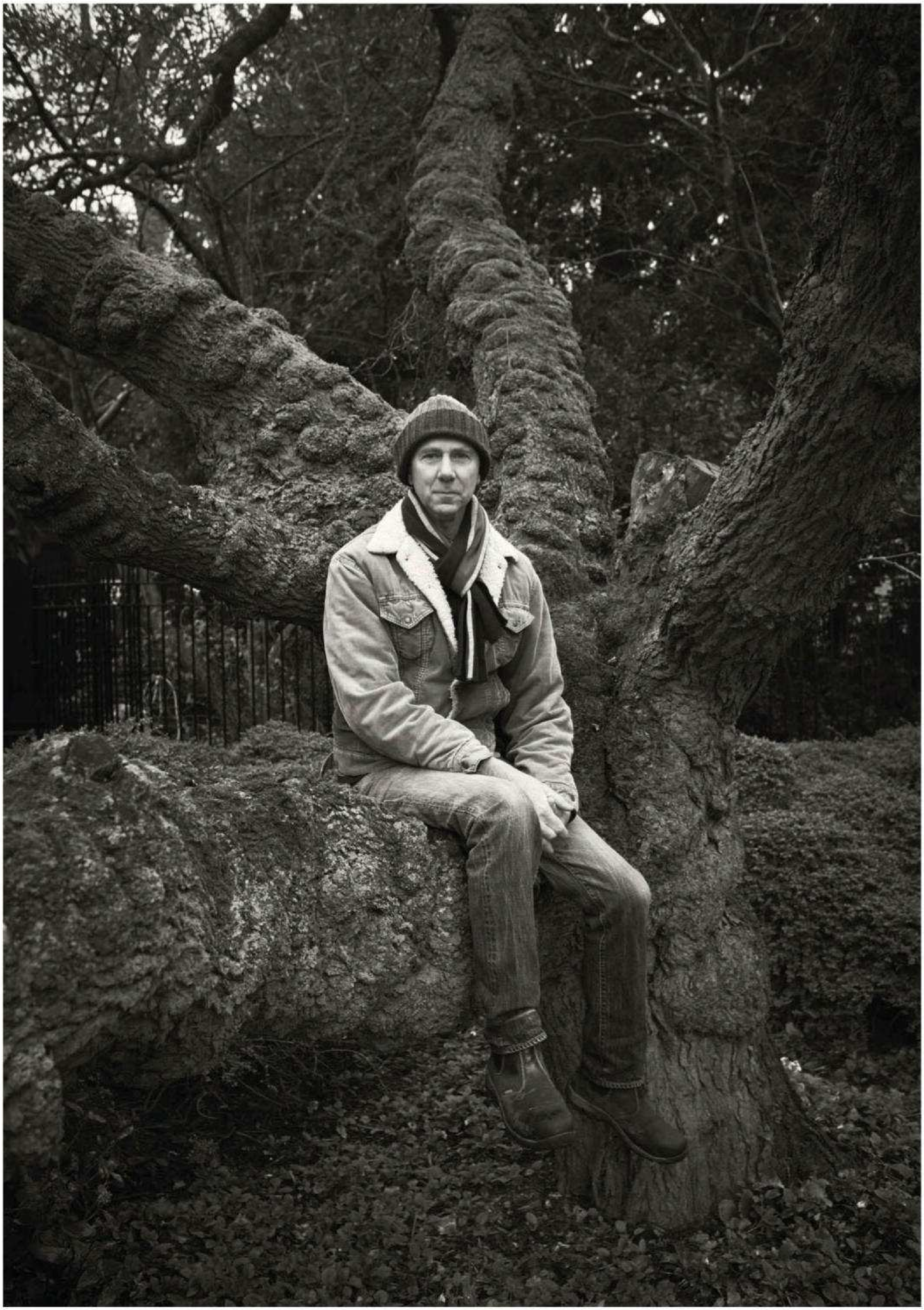
Like many talented designers Stephen also finds inspiration from outside the world of plants. Frank Lloyd Wright's designs for stained glass were the starting point for the Summer Garden. He's a collector of watercolours, mid-century glass, ceramics, contemporary prints. It's a passion he traces back to his boyhood in Walthamsow in east London when, from the age of ten, he would spend his earnings from a Saturday job on trinkets from antique stalls. He'd also been fascinated by his grandfather's chrysanthemums, and having grown geraniums in an abandoned greenhouse in his primary school he moved on to veg and other flowers at secondary school where, with remarkable boldness, he persuaded the teachers to move a glasshouse to a spot where it wouldn't be vandalised. He was offered a job in a local park but also wrote to the RHS to find out how to train to be a gardener. Some months later he was accepted for the two-year horticulture course at RHS Garden Wisley where, he says, he made the transition from boy to man.

Hungry for more experience, he applied there for an international place at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and was accepted. "Horticulturally that was like going from the 19th to the 21st century," he says. "Everything was much more modern, and the fountain gardens were so incredible." At the end of an exhilarating year he won a scholarship to the sub-tropical garden at Tresco, on the Isles of Scilly.

Both these trainings provided the groundwork for key aspects of his job at Winfield: Tresco gave him an appreciation of plant material in terms of form and texture, while Longwood showed him the possibilities of decorative horticulture. An essential part of the job at Winfield is creating the floral arrangements inside the house and in marquees. He shows me photos of his displays that show his flair for the bold and dramatic. With typical forthrightness he says, "There are lots of great gardeners and lots of great florists but there aren't that many who can combine the two, and I think I do. Floral design is about scale, proportion, context and theming. It's using the same disciplines that I use in the garden."

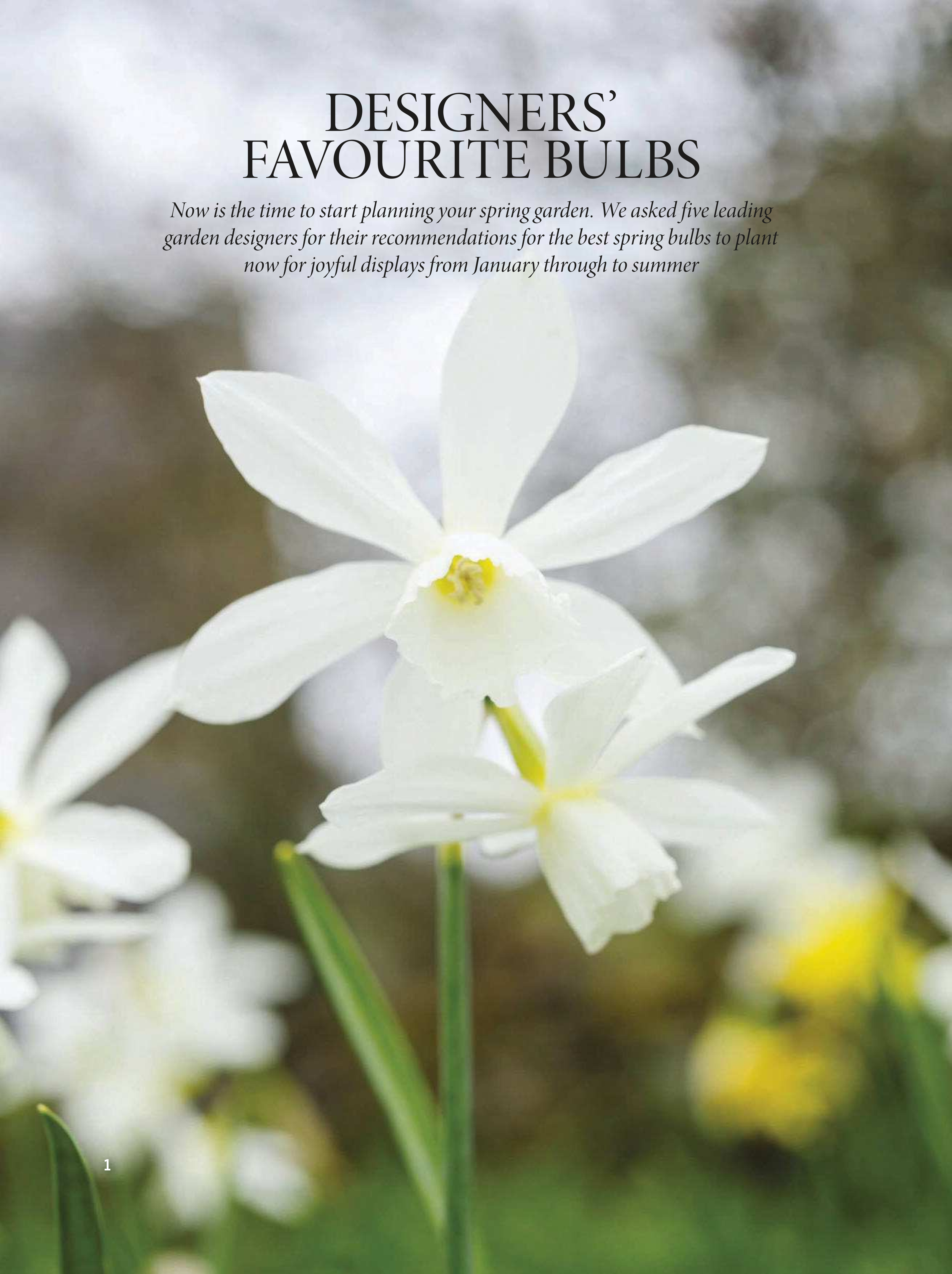
Stephen is keenly aware of the lucky breaks he's had and grateful for the encouragement from people in the industry and the relationships he's developed with other head gardeners. He manages to squeeze in some mentoring but would like to help more young horticulturists, and do more designing. For the moment there's the new garden that spirals round the new US Embassy building at Nine Elms in south London to be established. But with the blueprint for the long-term management of Winfield House garden now set in place, the handover to Stephen's eventual successor should be an easier proposition. ◻

NEXT MONTH Biologist and gardening columnist for *The Telegraph*, Ken Thompson.



DESIGNERS' FAVOURITE BULBS

Now is the time to start planning your spring garden. We asked five leading garden designers for their recommendations for the best spring bulbs to plant now for joyful displays from January through to summer



ANDY STURGEON

Garden designer, writer and TV presenter with a naturalistic approach

1 *Narcissus* 'Thalia'
This pure-white, multi-headed daffodil is all elegance and fragility, but deceptively tough. The petals flare backwards, thrusting the trumpet forward. Wonderful in damp, partial shade among *Anemone nemerosa*. **Flowers (F)** April. **Height (H)** 40cm. **Hardiness rating (HR)** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b†.

2 *Drimia maritima*
The Mediterranean sea squill is spectacular in large drifts in a gravel garden. The fleshy, agave-like foliage dies back to let the flower spike erupt from a naked bulb. Usually white but can be pink. **F** August – September. **H** 1m upwards. **HR** USDA 8a-11.

3 *Tulipa sprengeri*
A late-flowering scarlet tulip with bright, glossy green leaves, this is at home among primulas, naturalised in the cool shade of a light woodland or at the front of a sunny border in humus-rich soil. AGM*. **F** May. **H** 20-60cm. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

4 *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'
These robust alliums have starry white flowers packed into tight balls that demand attention as they hover above low-growing perennials. Happy in sun, they gleam among green companions in light shade. AGM. **F** May – June. **H** 1.2m. **HR** RHS H5.

5 *Fritillaria persica* 'Adiyaman'
The dark, dusky purple-black bells that hug the flower spike are sultry and mysterious. Add to that the blue-green leaves, and nothing is more arresting than a large pot packed full of these bulbs in full sun. AGM. **F** April. **H** 65-85cm. **HR** RHS H4.

6 *Camassia leichtlinii* subsp. *suksdorfii* Caerulea Group
From western USA, this perennial bulb makes a decent border plant, but is unbeatable naturalised in thick clumps in damp grass either in sun or preferably some shade. Needs to be dry in dormancy. **F** May. **H** 80cm. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

7 *Erythronium californicum* 'White Beauty'
The star-shaped flowers are a lovely creamy white, with recurved petals exposing a reddish-brown throat. The clumps of slightly mottled, rich-green, elliptic leaves are good groundcover under large deciduous shrubs. AGM. **F** March – April. **H** 30cm. **HR** RHS H5.

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1 JASON INGRAM; 2 ITSIK MAROM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 SHARON PEARSON; 4 ANDREA JONES IMAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 5 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 6 GARDEN WORLD IMAGES LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 7 JASON INGRAM / *GARDENERS' WORLD MAGAZINE*

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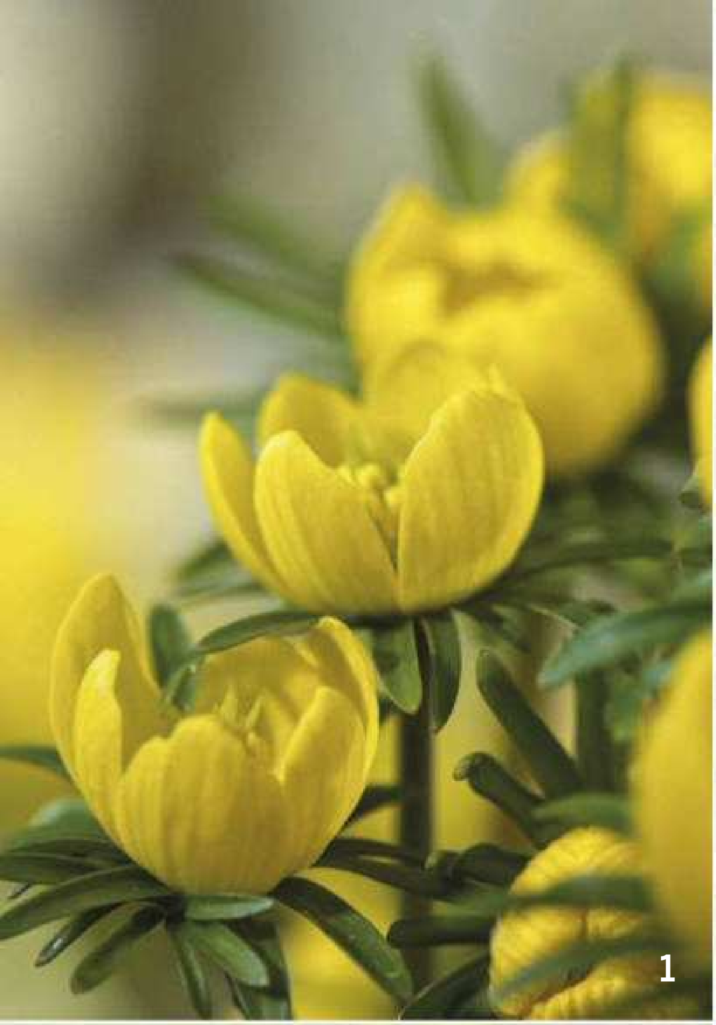
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardness ratings given where available.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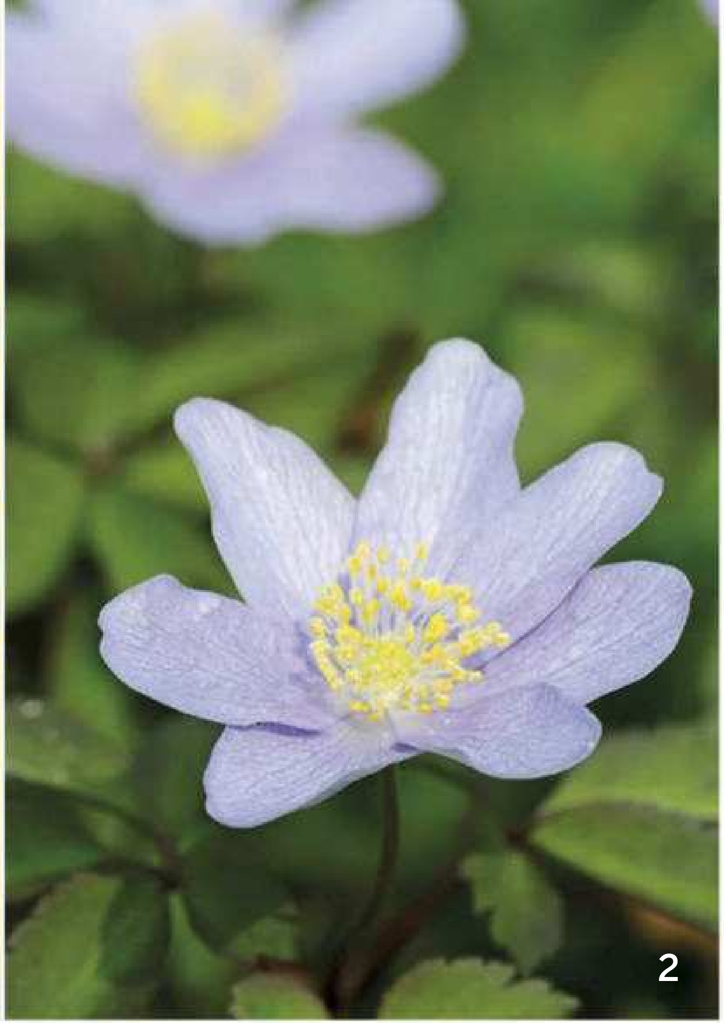
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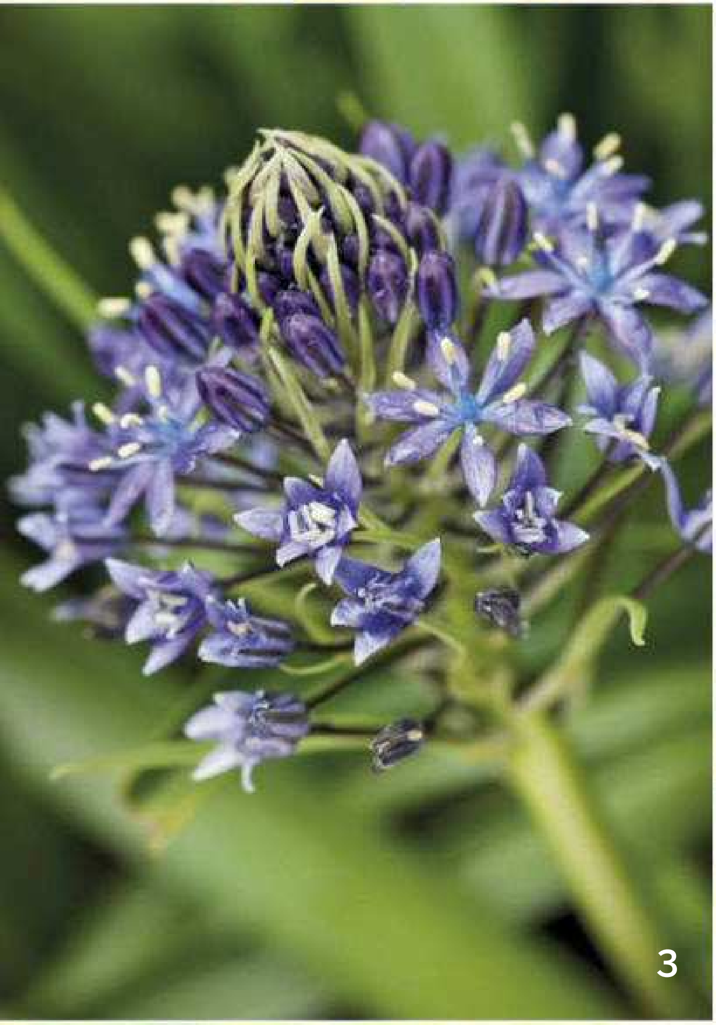
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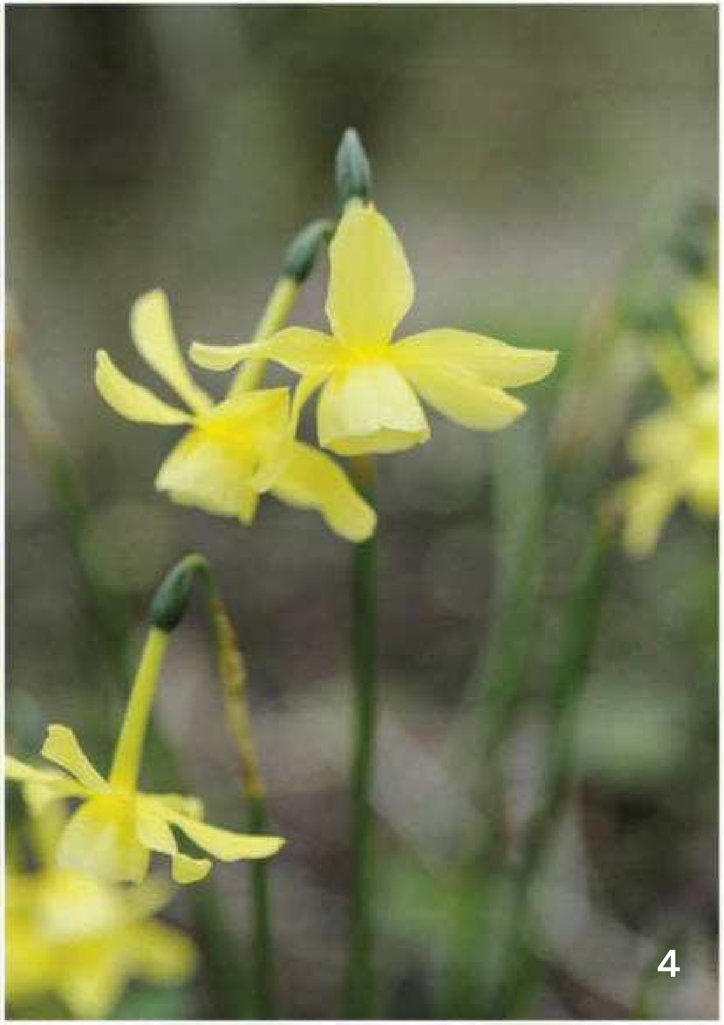
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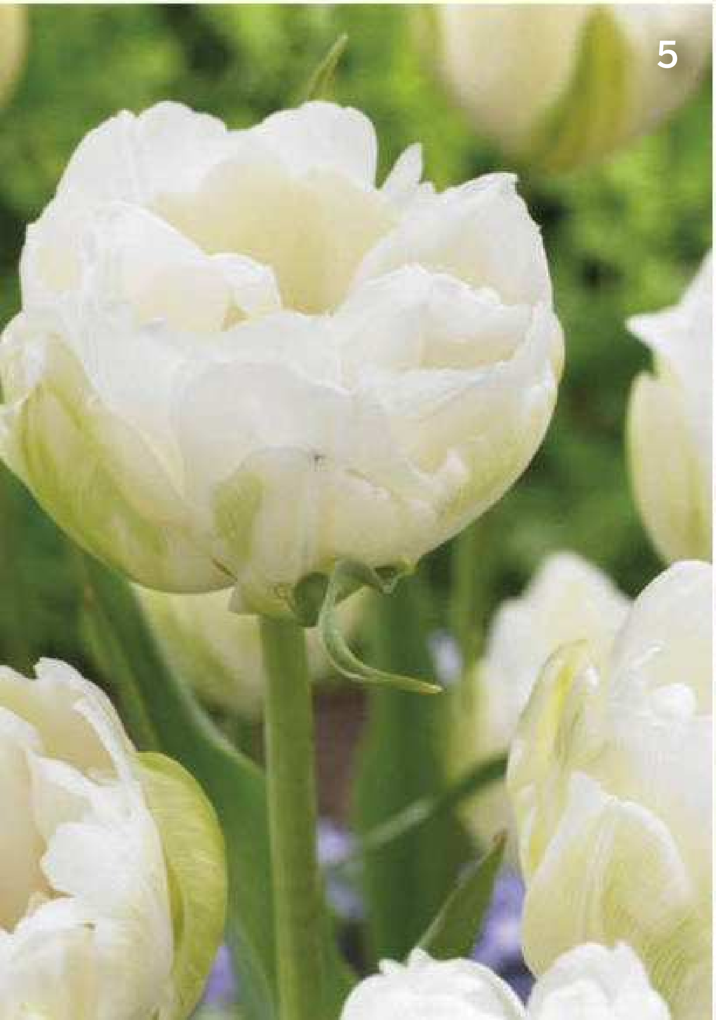
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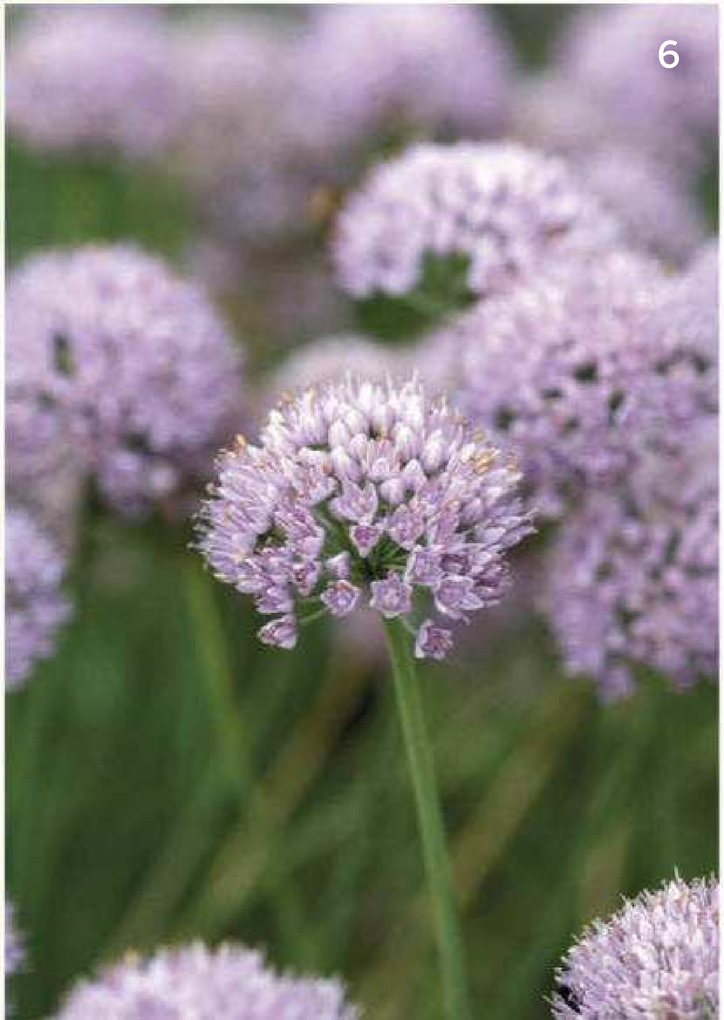
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EMILY ERLAM

Landscape designer whose harmonious designs blend seamlessly with their landscape

1 *Eranthis hyemalis*
Despite its diminutive nature, this aconite packs a punch by being the first early bulb to flower. Plant in large groups in shade or partial shade to make magical pools of rich yellow between trees or to throw up light on to a spring-flowering shrub. AGM. **F** January. **H** 10cm. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

2 *Anemone nemorosa* 'Robinsoniana'
Arriving as little stick-like corms, these small early season woodland plants are surprisingly dramatic. 'Robinsoniana' holds exquisite blue-grey petals above lush foliage. AGM. **F** March – April. **H** 20cm. **HR** RHS H5.

3 *Scilla peruviana*
Unlike other scillas, these produce huge flowerheads of vivid violet-blue flowers above fleshy leaves. I plant them in pots with a gravel dressing to recall their Mediterranean origins. Makes a lovely late-spring table display. Full sun. **F** May. **H** 30cm. **HR** RHS H4.

4 *Narcissus* 'Hawera'
If there's a bulb for every garden, it's this. The delicate flowerheads complement other bulbs or create an early accent in an otherwise barren landscape. Plant in a warm position in small groups and allow the dainty leaves to die back naturally. AGM. **F** April. **H** 25cm. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

5 *Tulipa* 'Maureen Double'
I recently planted these in my rose garden and the late appearance of the bold, creamy, double flowerheads on good strong stems was a delight. A good companion for early perennials and a nod towards imminent roses. **F** May. **H** 60cm. **HR** RHS H4.

6 *Allium senescens* subsp. *glaucum*
I use clusters of these at the front of the border for their structural silvery foliage, followed by subtle (dirty) pink flowers. A useful plant for a sunny position and the perfect foil for bolder colours in the garden. **F** June – July. **H** 15cm. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

7 *Crocus tommasinianus* 'Barr's Purple'
This soft lilac-mauve crocus makes a lovely display planted in large groups weaving through a bed for early season colour or under hellebores to illuminate their downward-facing flowers. Its 'pinkness' makes it a superior addition to a spring scheme. **F** February. **H** 10cm. **HR** RHS H4.

1 JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 2 MAGEBROKER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 ANDREA JONES MAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 4 JASON INGRAM; 5 VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS; 6 TORIE CHUGG / GAP PHOTOS; 7 SARAH CUTTLE / *GARDENERS' WORLD* MAGAZINE

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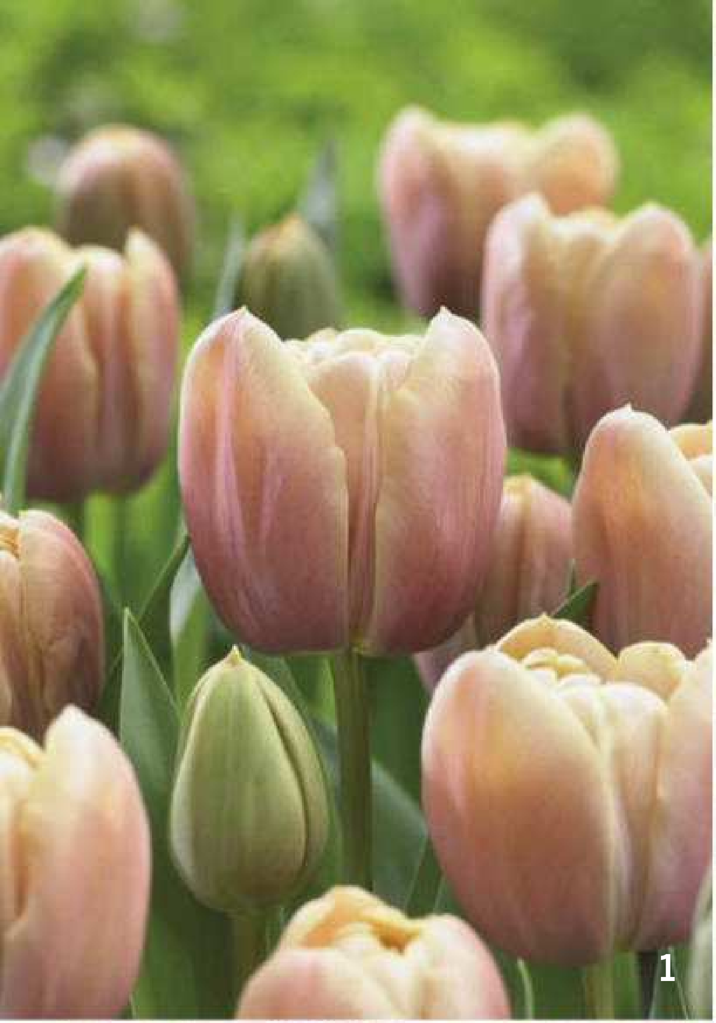

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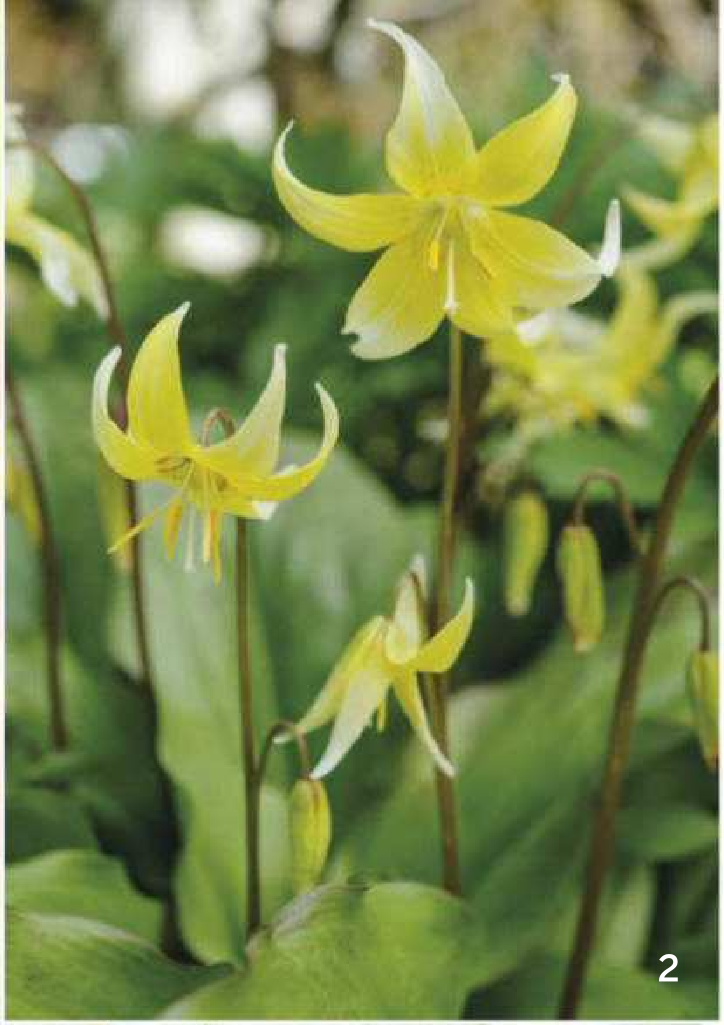

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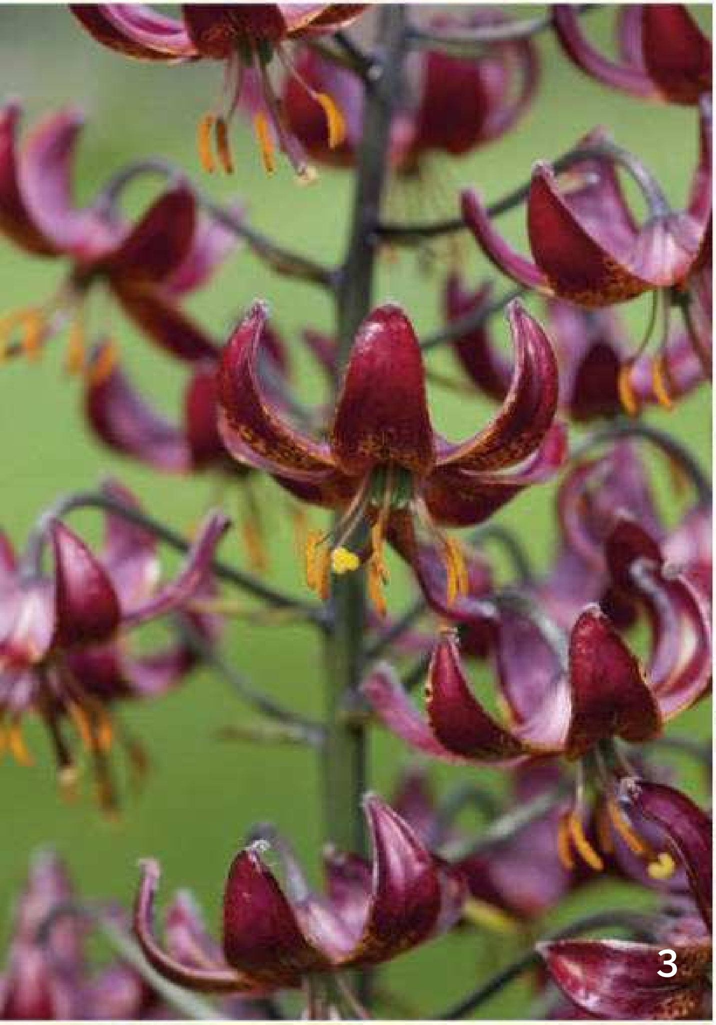

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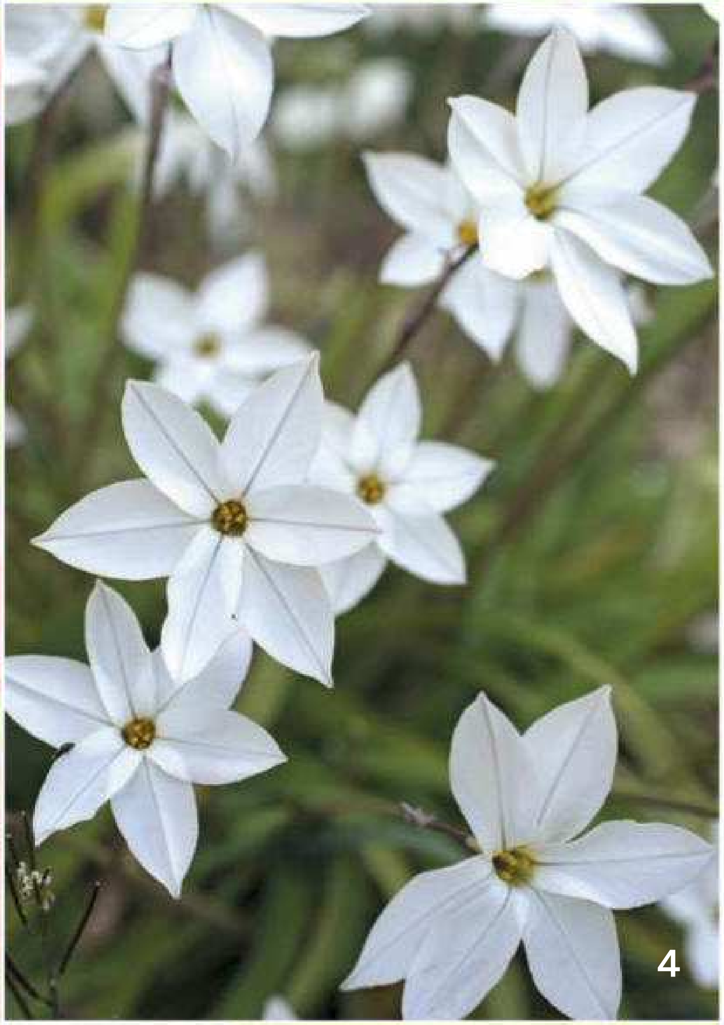

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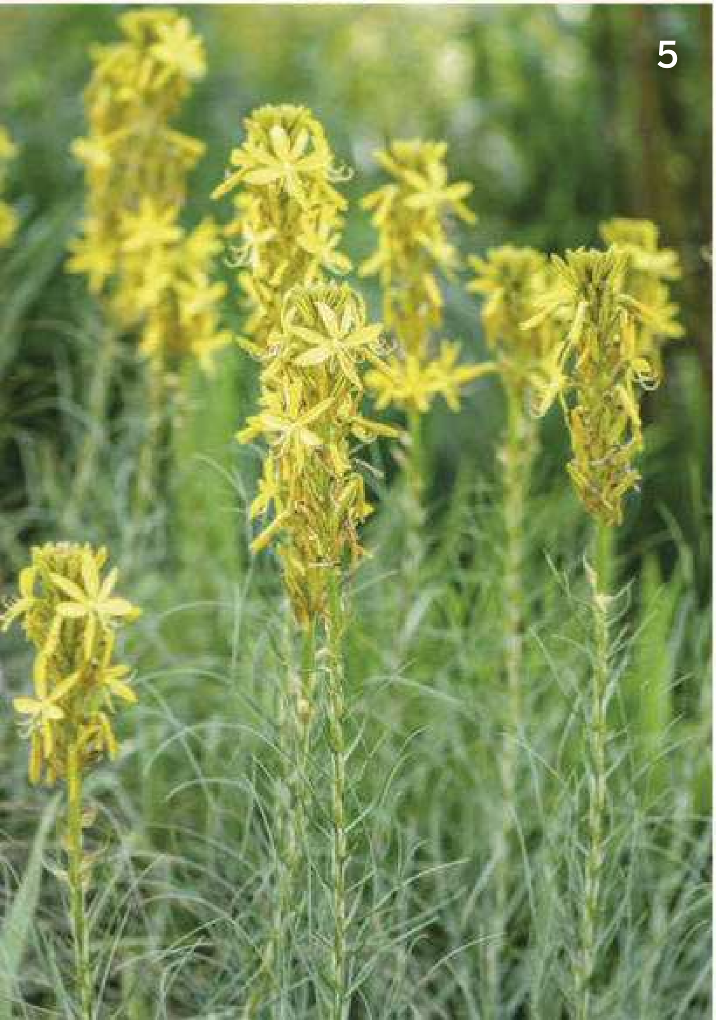

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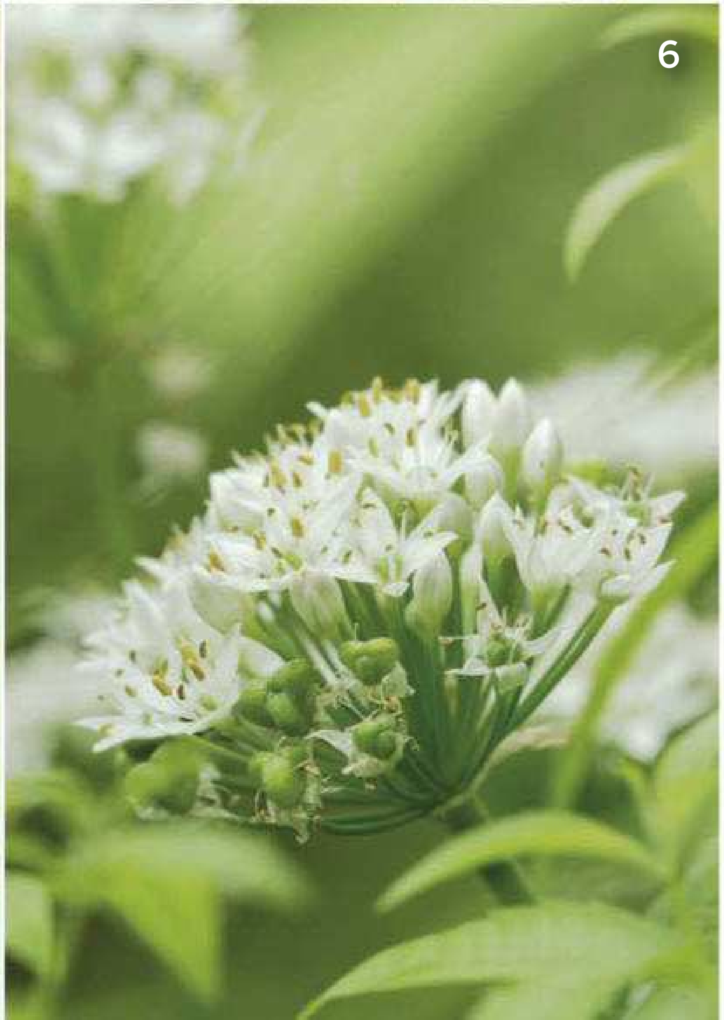


6

HUGO BUGG

Runs the Harris Bugg studio, with Charlotte Harris, and has an interest in environmental issues

1 *Tulipa* 'La Belle Époque'
A blousy, long-lasting double late with a delicious colour mix of champagne, dusty rose, apricot, milky coffee, antique pink and caramel. We plant it through plum, imperial purple and orange tulips. A great cut flower, too. **F** April – May. **H** 40cm. **HR** RHS H6.

2 *Erythronium* 'Pagoda'
This showy dog's tooth violet fares best in moist, slightly acidic soil and shade. Once settled, it will romp away in clumps, joyfully lighting up spring. Marbled, glossy green leaves are attractive in their own right. Plant it deep to prevent the bulb drying out. AGM. **F** March – April. **H** 35cm. **HR** RHS H5.

3 *Lilium* 'Arabian Knight'
These elegant, sumptuous Turk's caps of mahogany flowers and golden spots work well in different combinations, with red and yellow *Aquilegia canadensis*, for example, or in cooler arrangements, popping out of *Hakonechloa* alongside ferns and hostas. Plant in partial shade, and add grit if your soil is heavy. Pick off any scarlet lily beetles by hand. **F** June – July. **H** 1.2m. **HR** RHS H6.

4 *Ipheion* 'Alberto Castillo'
Pristine white, fragrant, star-shaped flowers with a soft-grey stripe are glorious in March and April. The dainty flowers sit atop slender, low, grey-green foliage that smells of garlic when crushed. Starflowers love sun and well-drained soil, and naturalise easily, so are great for a gravel garden or at the front of beds. AGM. **F** March. **H** 20cm. **HR** RHS H5.

5 *Asphodeline lutea*
These asphodels grow wild in Jordan where we are making a botanic garden, and I love their architectural, poker-like form. The bold, yellow, starry flowers mix well with the electric blue of *Anchusa*. Bees love it. Looks great in swathes in gravel or sunny coastal gardens with free-draining soil. **F** May – June. **H** 1.5m. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

6 *Allium tuberosum*
These are the latest of the alliums to flower, looking great from late summer into October, and can be planted as offsets in autumn with other bulbs. Known as Chinese chives, the edible leaves have a garlicky flavour, and the starry, white flowers are attractive to pollinators. **F** September – October. **H** 50cm. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

1 V S ONS / GAP PHOTOS; 2 JASON NGRAM; 3 TOMMY TONSBERG / GAP PHOTOS; 4 & 5 GARDEN WORLD IMAGES LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 6 KEITH BURDETT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

ULA MARIA

Garden designer, landscape architect and illustrator with a deep connection to nature

1 *Allium sphaerocephalon*
As its green flowers slowly ripen to purple *Allium sphaerocephalon* is a real indicator of the changing seasons. Planted among naturalistic grasses, these slender plants add a playful splash of colour and movement. AGM. **F** Late spring – summer. **H** 60-90cm. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

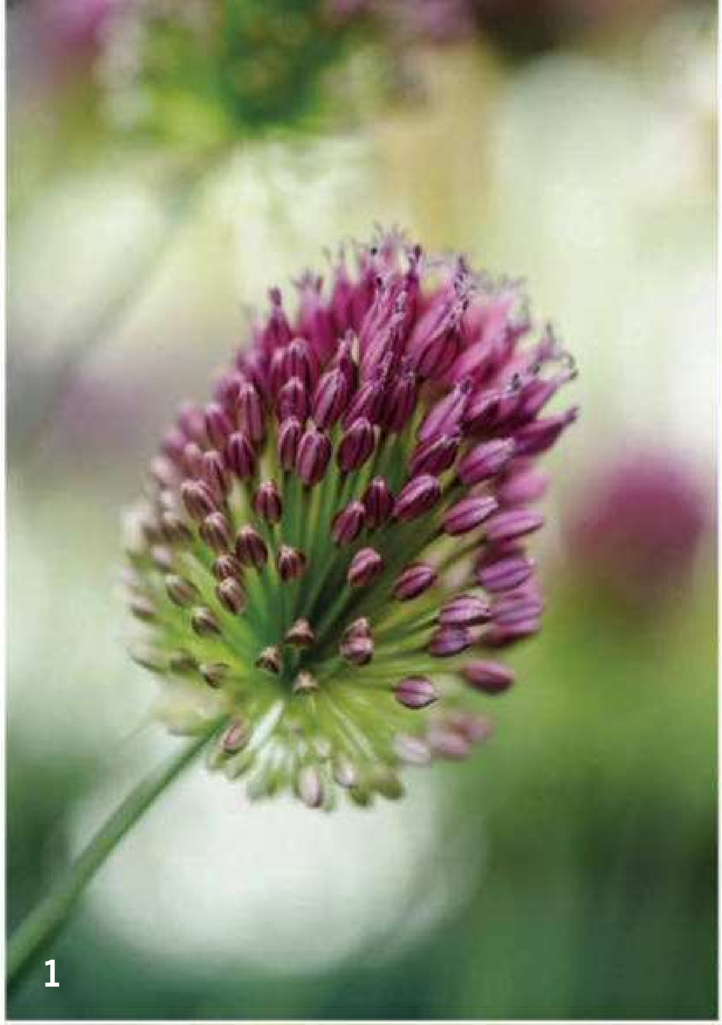
2 *Anemone nemorosa*
Anemone nemorosa is without doubt the star plant of many woodlands in spring. It's an ideal plant for brightening a shaded area beneath a tree but it looks equally wonderful when it is naturalised in lawns. Its delicate, daisy-like petals sway gracefully in the breeze, so it is no wonder that its more common name is 'windflower'. **F** March – April. **H** 17-25cm. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

3 *Tulipa turkestanica*
One of the earliest-blooming species tulips, *Tulipa turkestanica* produces several delightfully scented flowers on each stem. Some multiple flower-producing plants appear clumsy, but this one looks elegant and naturalistic. AGM. **F** March. **H** 20-25cm. **HR** RHS H5.

4 *Fritillaria meleagris*
The intricacy and complex beauty of the snake's head fritillary never ceases to amaze me. This almost alien-looking plant is bound to attract everyone's attention. Its chequered, bell-shaped flowers look impressively oversized hanging atop slender stems. Naturalised in grassy meadows, they are simply magical. AGM. **F** April – May. **H** 30cm. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

5 *Tulipa* 'Spring Green'
If I were asked to pick a single bulb that best represents the splendour of spring, I would have to choose *Tulipa* 'Spring Green'. The faultless blend of ivory-white and fresh-green flowers would elevate any planting arrangement. AGM. **F** Late April – May. **H** 40cm. **HR** RHS H6.

6 *Allium roseum*
The delicate rosy flowers of *Allium roseum* are not only beautiful, but practical too. The edible flowers of this ornamental onion taste just as good as they look, and their glowing blooms make a brilliant addition to any outdoor space, especially a kitchen garden. **F** May. **H** 30-60cm. **HR** RHS H6.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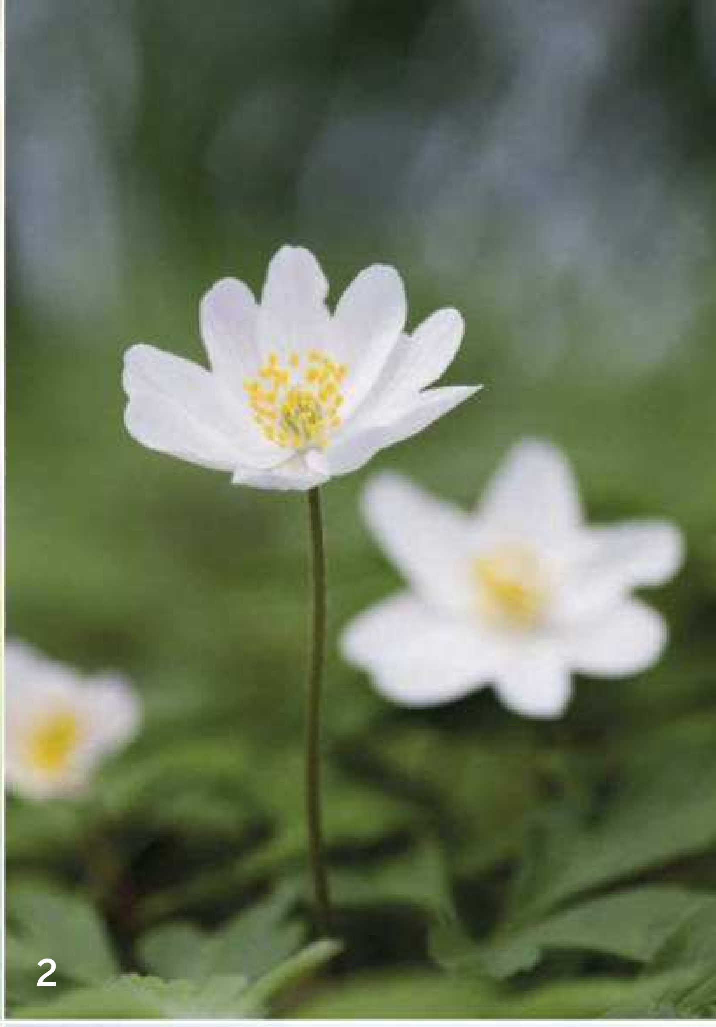
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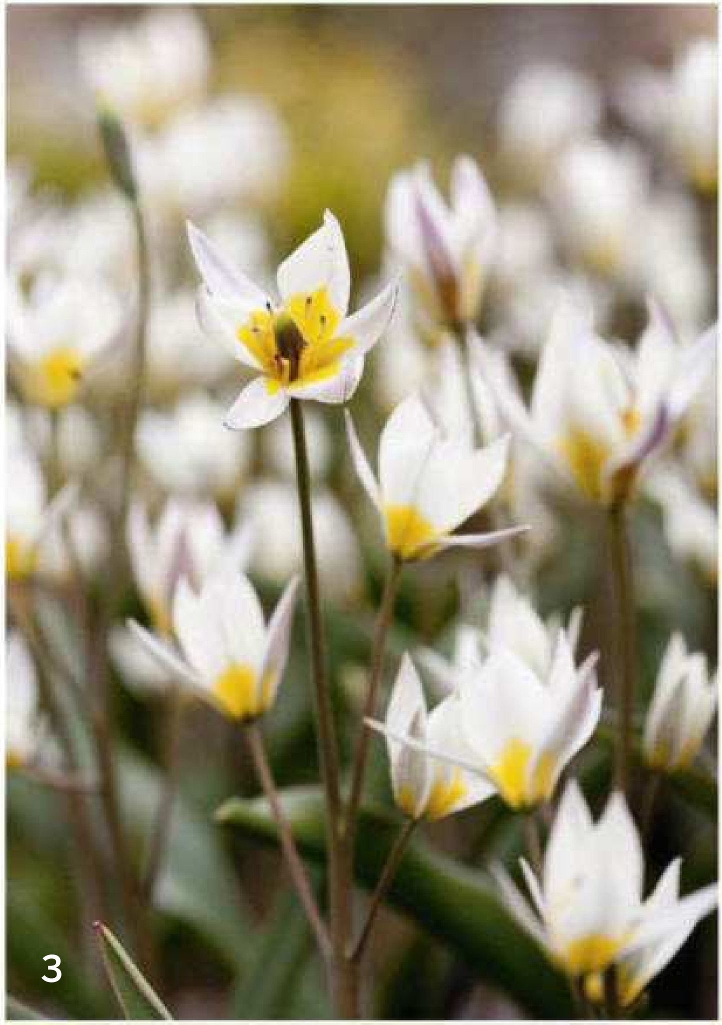
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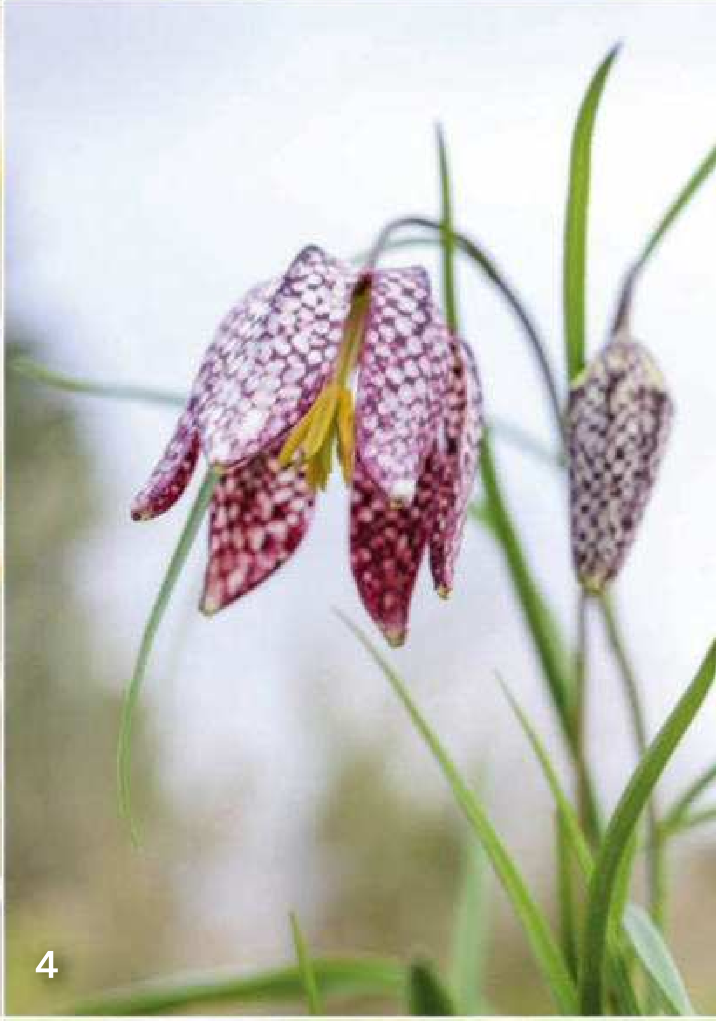
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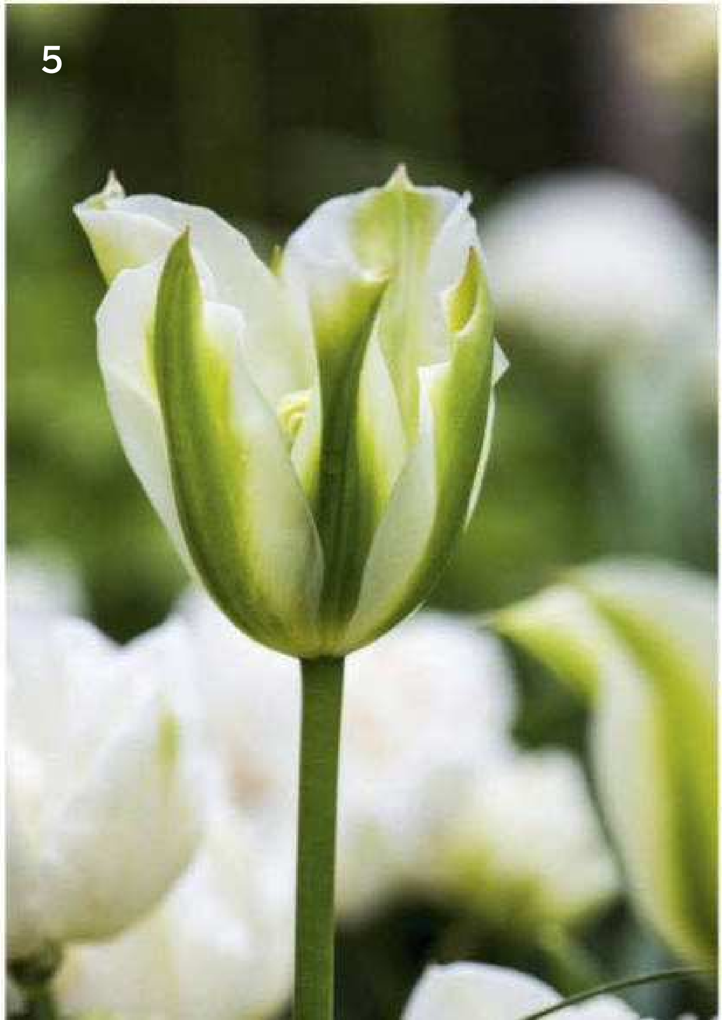
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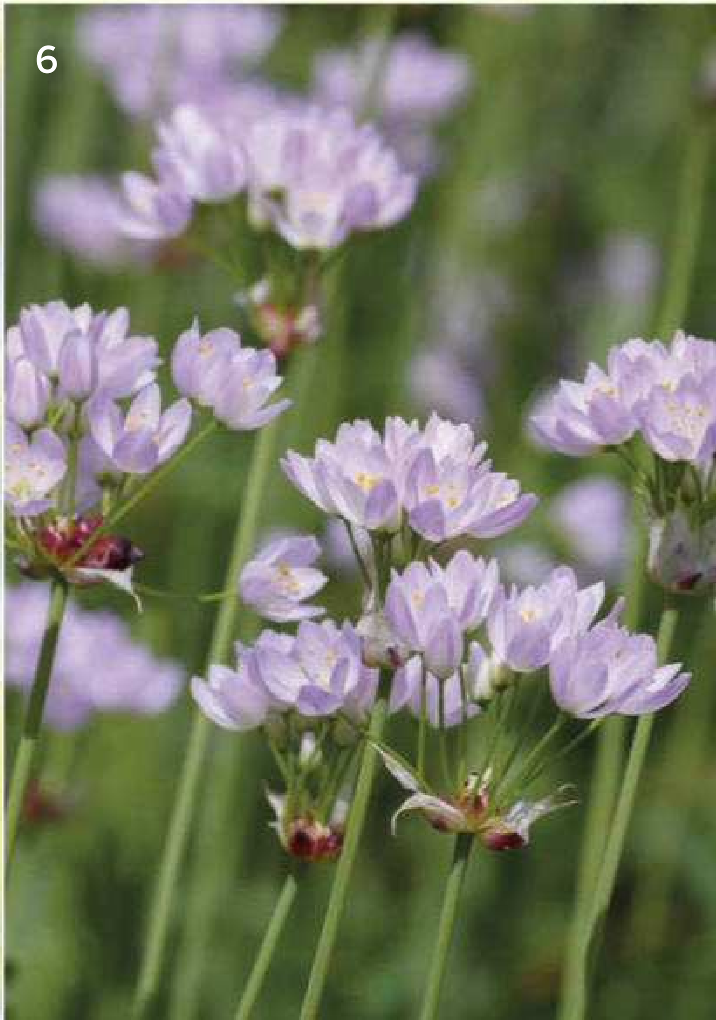
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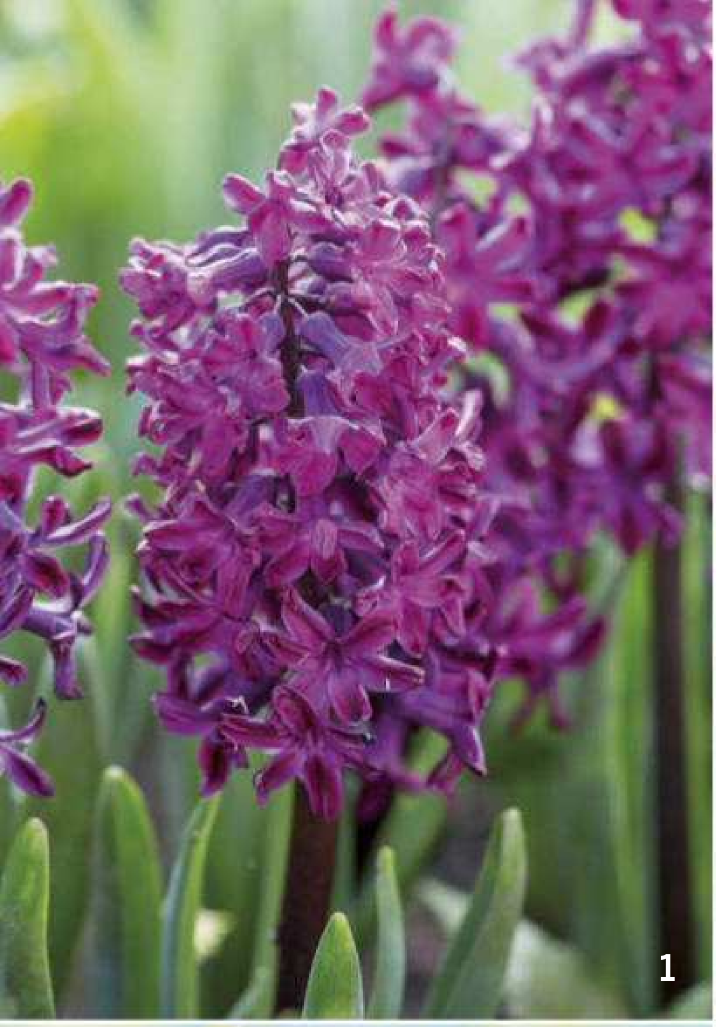
1 JASON INGRAM / *GARDENERS' WORLD* MAGAZINE; 2 T M GANEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 SHARON PEARSON; 4 JASON INGRAM; 5 RACHEL WARNE; 6 J S SIRA / GAP PHOTOS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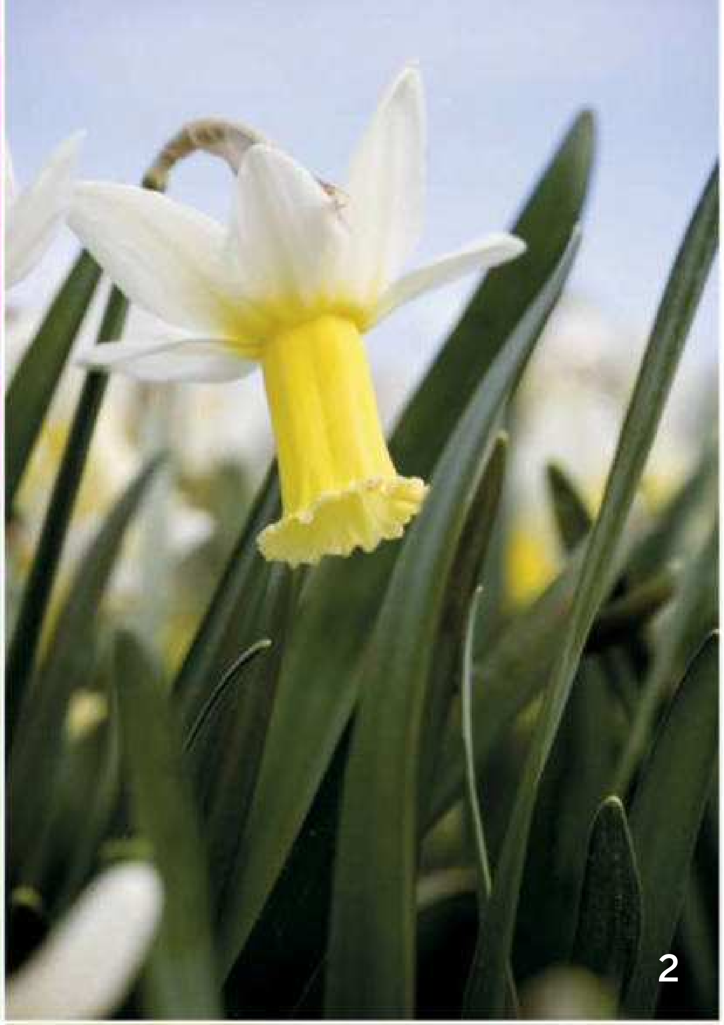
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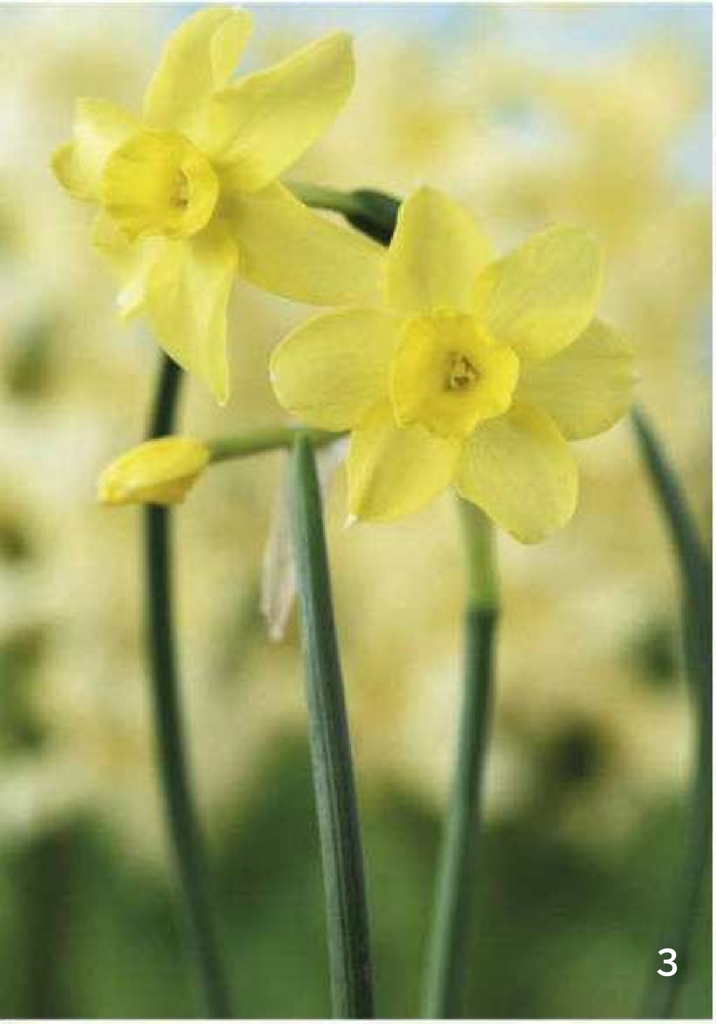
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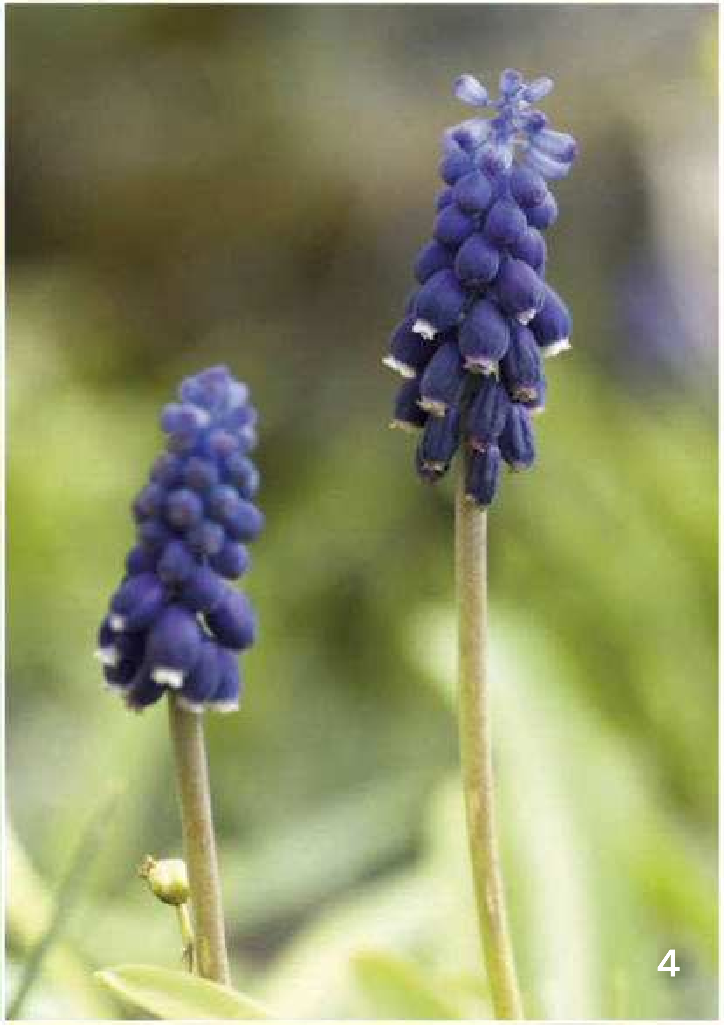
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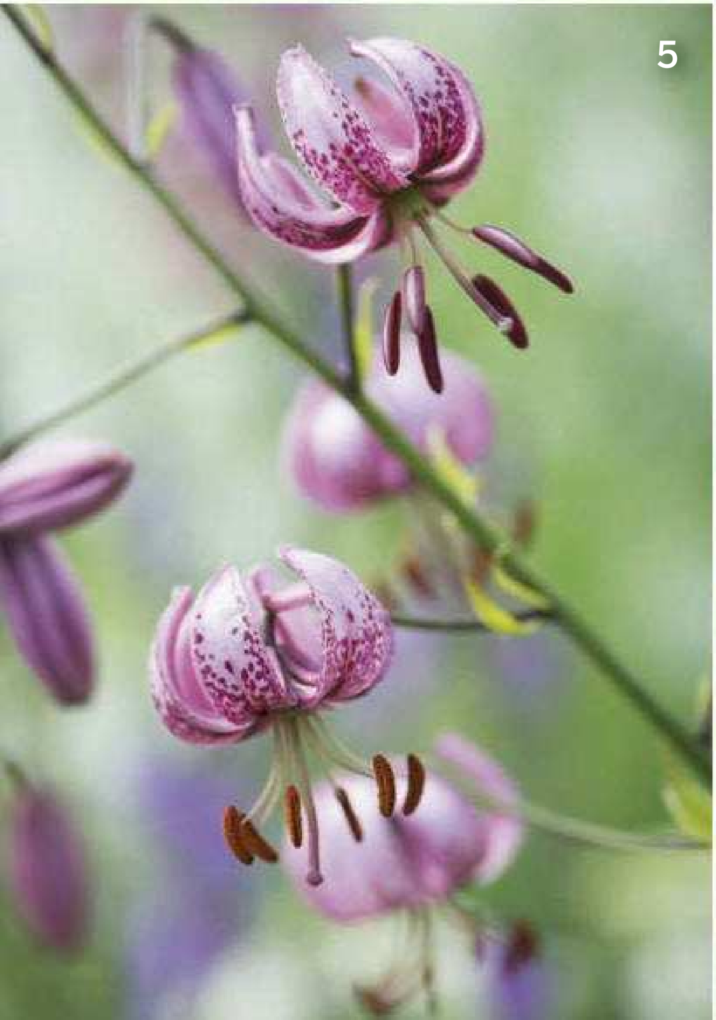
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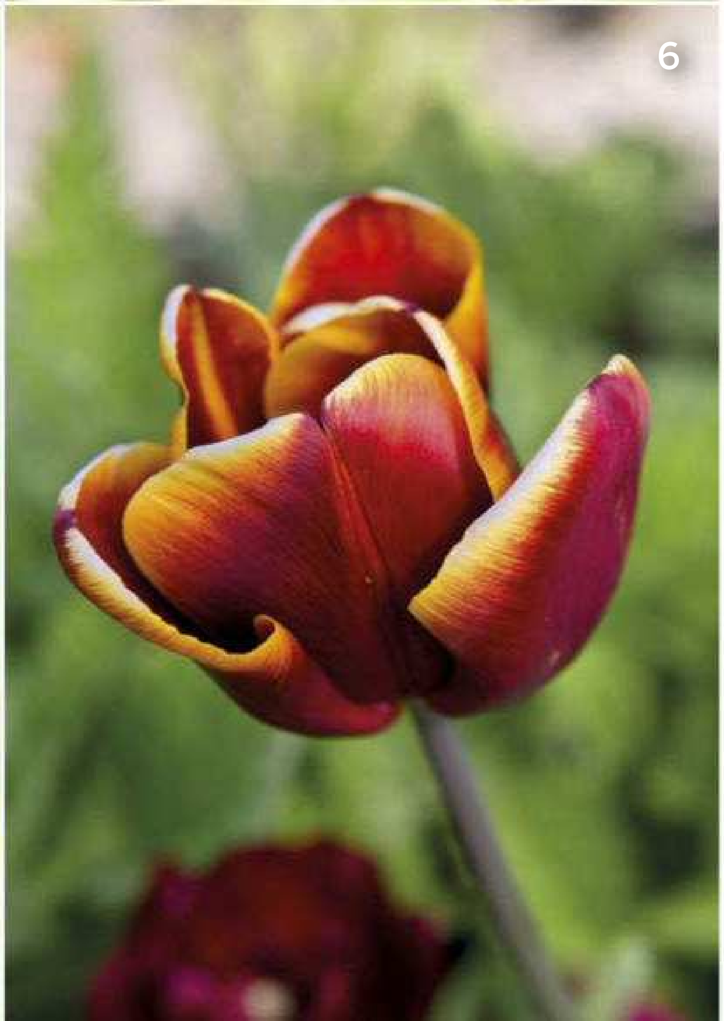
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JINNY BLOM

Prolific landscape designer and writer with a wide and highly creative portfolio

1 *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Woodstock'
These marvellous magenta hyacinths are so bold and rich in colour that placing them requires a bit of thought. Plant among the huge lime-green leaves of *Salvia forsskaolii* in light shade, or in pots with a ruff of *Viola* 'Martin' for a splendidly intense experience. **F** May. **H** 10-50cm. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.

2 *Narcissus* 'Tracey'
I love pale, creamy-white daffodils, and the more elfin they are, the sweeter they seem in early spring after the long, cold wait. These beautiful cyclamineus narcissi have a winsome look, with their swept-back perianths and trumpet cups. **F** April. **H** 10-50cm. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Narcissus* 'Sabrosa'
This exquisite, tiny, scented jonquil has several soft-yellow flowers per stem and lasts for ages. It enjoys a dry summer and is a wonderful naturaliser in warm, dry sandy or gritty soil, or a good loam. If you have cloddish clay, it might work better in pots. AGM. **F** April. **H** Up to 10cm. **HR** RHS H6.

4 *Muscari neglectum*
I love everything about these plants. The cramped, navy-blue, white-tipped bells look as if they've been drawn by a child. It's best to naturalise them below small trees. **F** April – May. **H** 10-50cm. **HR** RHS H6.

5 *Lilium martagon*
Scented, reflexed flowers all the way up the stem vary in colour from mid- to deep pink, and there is a pure white in cultivation too. They are reliable naturalisers, and the erect seed stems last well into winter, lending a bold sillhouette to the frosts. AGM. **F** June – July. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **HR** RHS H6.

6 *Tulipa* 'Abu Hassan'
The fiery, mahogany-orange 'Abu Hassan' contrasts with the rich purples and reds of the usual tulip selections. In the early part of the year, the garden needs a bold discord of colour to blast us out of the winter doldrums. **F** April – May. **H** 10-50cm. **HR** RHS H6.

7 *Convallaria majalis*
Lily of the valley is a must; leaves unfurl from brownish-purple stems into a mint-green fan, followed by arching racemes of fragrant, nodding bell-shaped flowers. AGM. **F** May. **H** 10-50cm. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

1 PAUL DEBOIS / *GARDENERS WORLD* MAGAZINE; 2 SHARON PEARSON / GAP PHOTOS; 3 CHRIS BURROWS / GAP PHOTOS; 4 PREMIUM STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY GMBH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 5 TIM GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 6 SARAH CUTTLE / *GARDENERS' WORLD* MAGAZINE; 7 JASON INGRAM / *GARDENERS' WORLD* MAGAZINE

7

READER OFFER

Gardens Illustrated readers can receive 20% off many of the bulbs featured here at Jacques Amand. See page 103 for details,and turn the page for details of other recommended bulb suppliers.

WHERE TO BUY BULBS

A selection of some of the best bulb suppliers offering a good choice of bulbs for autumn planting

AVON BULBS

If Avon Bulbs puts on a display at a garden show it's worth allowing yourself a decent amount of time to look at everything it has got on offer. Award-winner time and again, the range includes the expected tulips and daffodils and other treats, including *Tulipa* 'Armani', a good substitute for *Tulipa* 'Abu Hassan', currently in short supply. Tel 01460 242177, avonbulbs.co.uk

BLOMS BULBS

The winner of 67 Gold Medals for its cut tulip displays at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Good range of species tulips, which naturalise well and can also be left in the ground from year to year. Bloms also has display gardens at Pashley Manor in Sussex, Constable Burton in North Yorkshire, Chenies Manor in Hertfordshire and Glenarm Castle in Northern Ireland. Tel 01234 709099, blomsbulbs.com

BROADLEIGH BULBS

Headed by expert Christine Skelmersdale, this is the place to come if you are looking for small-flowering bulbs – narcissus in particular, as Broadleigh Bulbs holds a National Collection of miniature daffodils. Also of note are the dwarf bearded iris. A display garden at the nursery in Somerset is open throughout the year, and you can find useful advice on the website. Tel 01823 286231, broadleighbulbs.co.uk

CAMBO

Renowned for its snowdrops, Cambo, located in Fife, Scotland, has been voted as Best Supplier of Bulbs 'in the green' by *Which? Gardening*. You'll need to wait until just after flowering in spring for the clumps of snowdrops to be dug up from the Cambo Estate's woodland and be offered for sale. However, you can order 'damp packed' snowdrops now for autumn planting. Tel 01333 450054, cambosnowdrops.com

DE JAGER

An established supplier for 150 years, the extensive collection includes some more unusual choices, such as *Bellevalia*, (similar to muscari, from the *Hyacinthaceae* family), outdoor amaryllis and English bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. Tel 01622 840229, dejager.co.uk

GREAT DIXTER

The nursery at the garden sells a small selection of bulbs for autumn planting. These have been supplied by other trusted bulb companies but you can be assured that the choices here will be good ones and thoroughly proven in their garden worthiness by the Dixter gardeners. You'll find the best choice at the Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair, which this year is on 6-7 October. Tel 01797 254044, greatdixter.co.uk

HARE SPRING COTTAGE PLANTS

Run by expert Stella Exley, Hare Spring holds the National Collection of *Camassia* and as such has an excellent supply of camassia cultivars for sale as bulbs from the popular *Camassia* 'Blue Heaven' with its rich lavender-blue flowers to a rare pale-pink cultivar. Tel 07792 376805, harespringcottageplants.co.uk

JACQUES AMAND

Large selection of autumn-planted bulbs, especially narcissus and tulips. The company was established as a flower shop on London's Strand by Dutchman Jean Jacques Amand in 1927. This year's display at Chelsea won the company its 32nd gold medal from the RHS. *Gardens Illustrated* readers can enjoy a 20 per cent discount on selected bulbs from Jacques Amand this month, see page 103 for details. Tel 020 8420 7110, jacquesamandintl.com

J PARKER'S

You'll find a reliable selection with lots of bulbs and plenty of offers including the new *Iris* 'Katherine's Gold' in pale creamy yellow, one of the plants Dan Pearson is trialling in his own garden. There's also a large wholesale selection for bulk buying. Tel 0161 848 1100, jparkers.co.uk

NIJSSEN BULBS

Established Dutch bulb company with a particular focus on the sought-after Rembrandt tulips, and other rarities such as the fragrant 'Dom Pedro'. It also has a good range of alliums and historic narcissus. Tel +31 (0)23 547 1056 nijssentuin.nl

PETER NYSSEN

Peter Nyssen is the only major bulb company to have replaced all its plastic packaging with a fully compostable and biodegradable alternative. This accounts for 1,500kg less single-use plastic packing going into our environment. The website has a good bulb category selection feature that helps to pinpoint choices to suit your garden. In its 'New & Special' section Dutch *Iris* 'Autumn Princess' stands out as interesting choice. Tel 0161 747 4000, peternyssen.com

POTTERTONS

An expert in dwarf bulb cultivars. While some species are better suited to the expert grower able to provide specific conditions, there's plenty for the general enthusiast too and the chance to really extend your range of spring-interest flowers. Tel 01472 851714, pottertons.co.uk

SARAH RAVEN

Well known for her carefully chosen selection of plants including bulbs – all of which will have been grown and tested in her garden at Perch Hill, Sarah's collections are increasingly popular and reflect the current trend in cut flowers and floristry. Her new Honey and Smoke Tulip Collection is described as 'mauve, apricot and ochre, the 1970s meets 2018-19'. Tel 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.co.uk

SCAMPS DAFFODILS

This multi award-winning, family business based in Cornwall, is best known for its daffodils – although it also offers other bulbs. Expert and owner Ron Scamp has daffodils for sale in all 13 of the RHS divisions along with descriptions of what distinguishes each of those divisions and an interesting selection of historic examples. Tel 07826 067175, qualitydaffodils.com

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FURTHER INFORMATION

This year's hot, dry summer has meant that crop harvests for bulbs, which need the moisture to bulk up, are much lower than anticipated for some choices – or indeed not available at all for some cultivars. You may also notice that bulb size in general seems a little smaller this year. All companies are working hard to provide continuity of supply but are urging customers to get orders in early, so be sure to order your bulbs as soon as possible. ❑

SABRINA ROTHE

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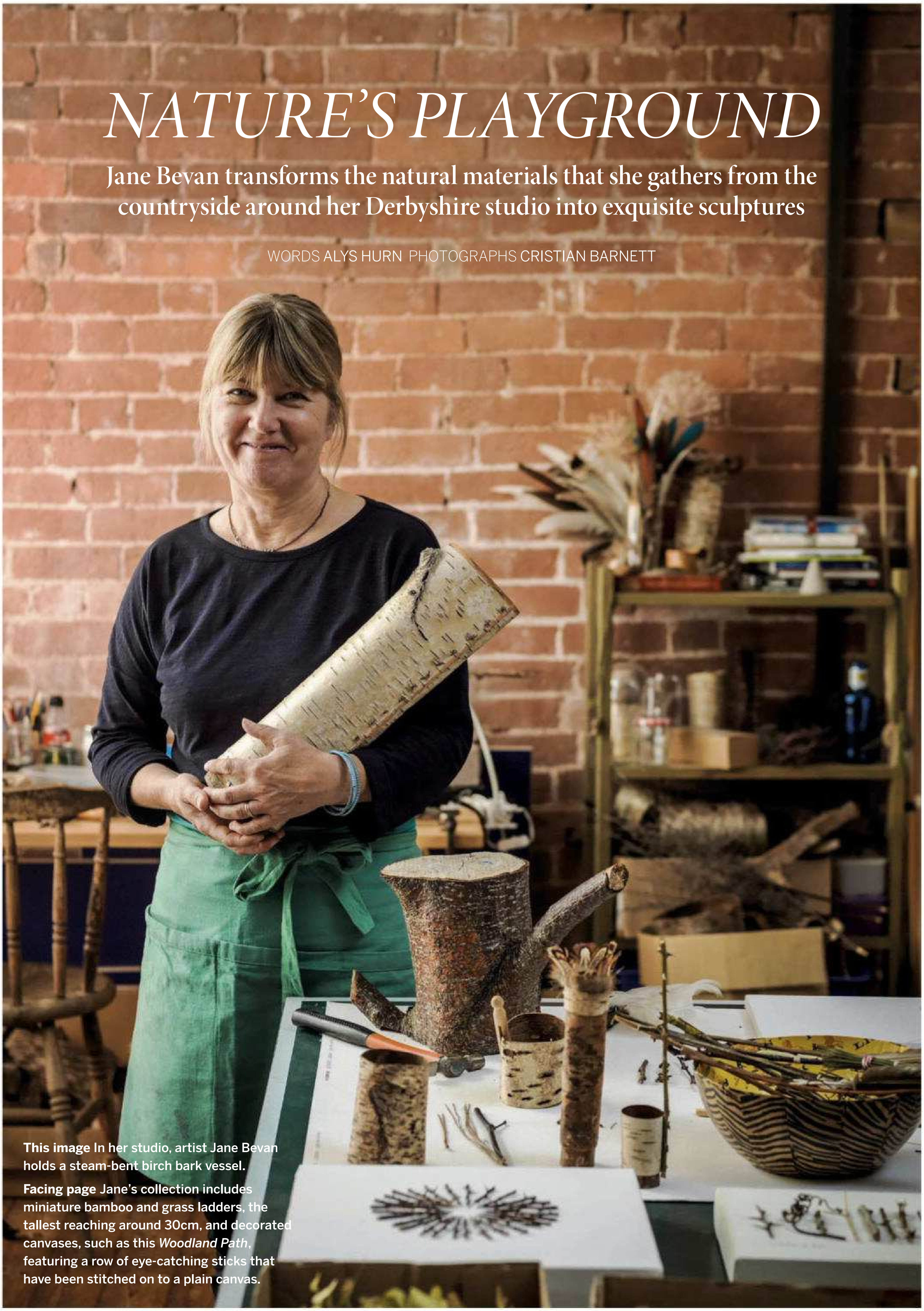
B.N. DOBBE - MIDBROOK - 1988
DOBBE-MIDBROOK
B.N. DOBBE - MIDBROOK - 1988

NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

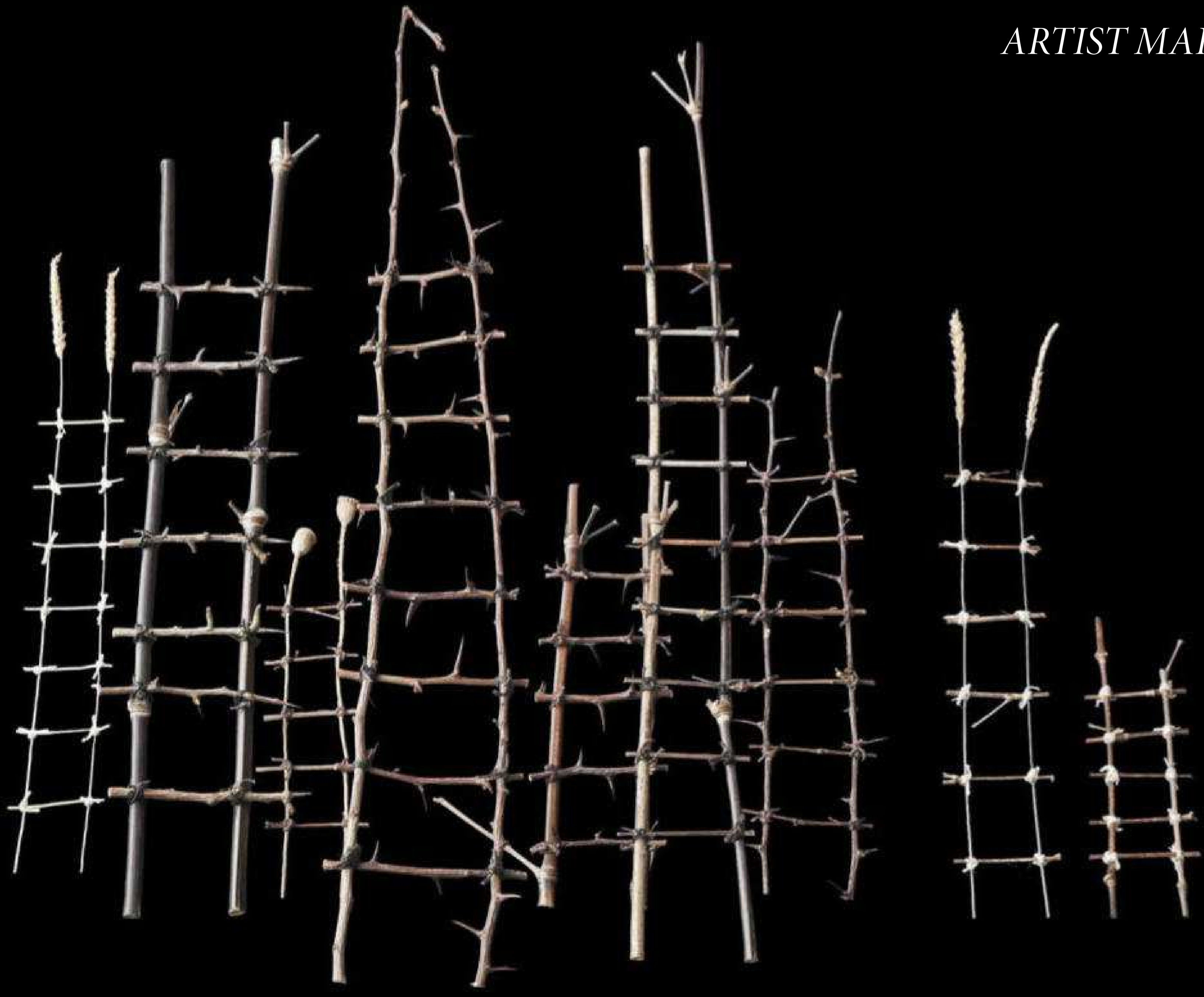
Jane Bevan transforms the natural materials that she gathers from the countryside around her Derbyshire studio into exquisite sculptures

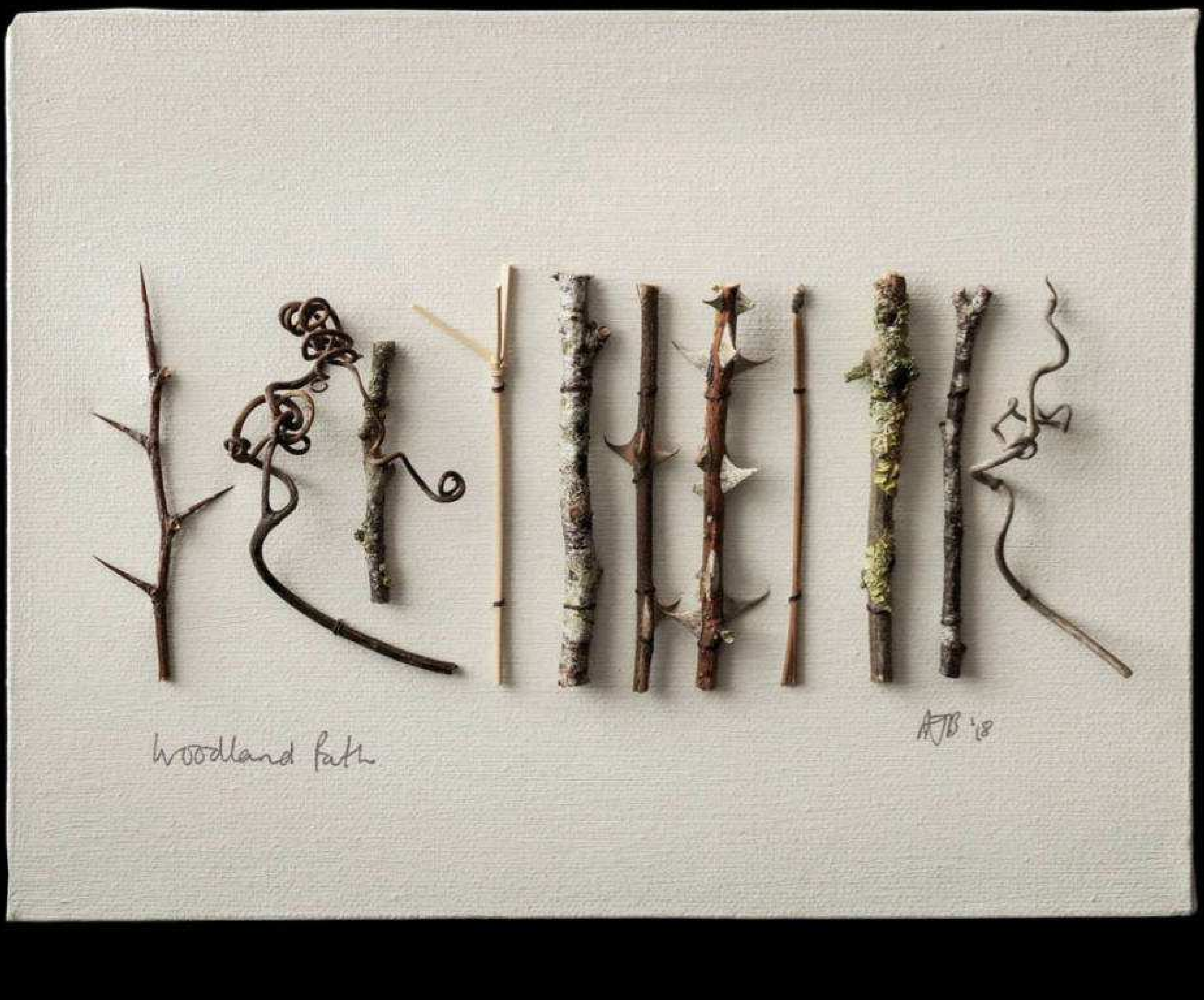
WORDS ALYS HURN PHOTOGRAPHS CRISTIAN BARNETT



This image In her studio, artist Jane Bevan holds a steam-bent birch bark vessel.

Facing page Jane's collection includes miniature bamboo and grass ladders, the tallest reaching around 30cm, and decorated canvases, such as this *Woodland Path*, featuring a row of eye-catching sticks that have been stitched on to a plain canvas.




Woodland Path
AJB '18

Artist Jane Bevan has a very covetable home studio space. It’s a huge, bright attic room, converted from an old barn building, with impressive beams and beautiful brickwork. In the centre is a large table, laden with boxes and baskets, and every one is filled with bits of nature gathered from local woodland near her home in south Derbyshire. From pine needles to sycamore seedheads, feathers, twigs and strips of bark. It’s like a very organised forest floor. Jane, who has enjoyed collecting things all her life, uses them to make intricate vessels and small sculptures.

Ten years ago, after a career working in art galleries and museums, Jane enrolled on a degree in craft at the University of Derby to give her time to experiment using and working with the materials she collects. She quickly found traditional steam bending and wood turning techniques too restrictive, so decided to go down what she calls a more poetic route. “It sounds a bit pompous, but I wanted to do something more whimsical. I paired it back and back and I ended up making objects and vessels from the natural materials, tied together,” she says.

The method she uses to assemble her work is very similar to basket-making, all her pieces are tied, stitched together or nailed down; she rarely uses glue. Jane admits the process can be very trial and error but it’s all part of what she wants to achieve, finding ways of bringing interesting details and examples of nature together in unexpected ways. Her collection includes thorn baskets, birch pots and some intriguing compositions she describes as wall jewellery, which are made up of a carefully chosen selection of seedheads, feathers and one very striking twig. Her pieces are all about balance and size and she likes them to be elegant. Miniature ladders are the latest addition to her collection. The black bamboo she uses to make them is actually used in other countries for ladders and scaffolding on construction sites, because it is so strong.

Japanese philosophy and the Japanese attitude to nature, which is one of great worship and respect, intrigues Jane. “It’s not about the louder, wow-factor bits of nature,” she explains. “It’s more the quiet bits and I want my work to be quiet. I like the idea that you’d approach it and be intrigued by it, and it would grow into something.” Jane is also interested in the Japanese notion of *wabi-sabi* and the philosophy of finding beauty in every detail and it’s clear that this has a huge influence on how each material is chosen for a finished piece of work. “It’s hard to put your finger on it,” she says, “but it sends shivers up your spine because it’s just so perfect.”

> IT’S HARD TO PUT YOUR FINGER ON WHAT MAKES A MATERIAL RIGHT FOR A PIECE BUT IT SENDS SHIVERS UP YOUR SPINE BECAUSE IT’S JUST SO PERFECT

The way Jane makes each item in her collection is very playful and organic. She will experiment with the materials she loves; plaiting, tying, twisting and scrunching until she is happy with the effect. “I try not to plan very much,” she says. “I try not to overthink it because the materials don’t respond to that.” There are lots of projects on the go, all at the same time and Jane often sets aside pieces to finish off later to build the anticipation and excitement of completion. Every piece is unique and Jane never makes two identical pieces.

Jane’s work has a whimsical and playful quality but it also embodies an element of nostalgia. She brings to it her own childhood memories of being in the woods, and is inspired by folk tales and myths about woodlands and trees. She says she knows it’s not everyone’s cup of tea and it can divide people, but it’s a lovely thing when somebody gets it. It’s why she prefers to sell her work at shows. She can meet people who love the materials, and understand what her work is about. “It has become so much a part of what I want to do, and what I’m always planning to do, I couldn’t live without it really.”

USEFUL INFORMATION

You can see Jane’s work at the *Seasons of Plenty* exhibition at The Gallery, 24 Market Place, Masham, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 4EB. Tel 01765 689554, mashamgallery.co.uk, which runs until 29 October. Jane also hosts creative workshops, visit her website **janebevan.co.uk** for upcoming events and further details on how to buy her work.

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1 A lichen-covered hawthorn branch supports a pine needle, a winged sycamore seed, and a dried poppy seedhead.

2 This simply framed piece of wall jewellery allows the natural materials to be individually enjoyed and celebrated as a complete composition.

3 Jane rearranges a collection of bird feathers that she has sewn into a bark collar at the top of a weighted vessel.

4 Careful not to take too many materials and disturb the ecological balance, Jane gathers what she needs a little at a time.

5 Lit by soft natural light, the windowsill in her studio is home to a collection of objects that inspire Jane's creativity.

6 A row of carefully chosen sticks in different sizes, shapes and natural hues are sewn on to a rectangular canvas.

7 Jane likes her pieces to be displayed together because each one will complement the other.

8 Jane carefully ties slender sticks together, in layers on top of one another to create one of her delicate-looking yet rigid twig baskets.

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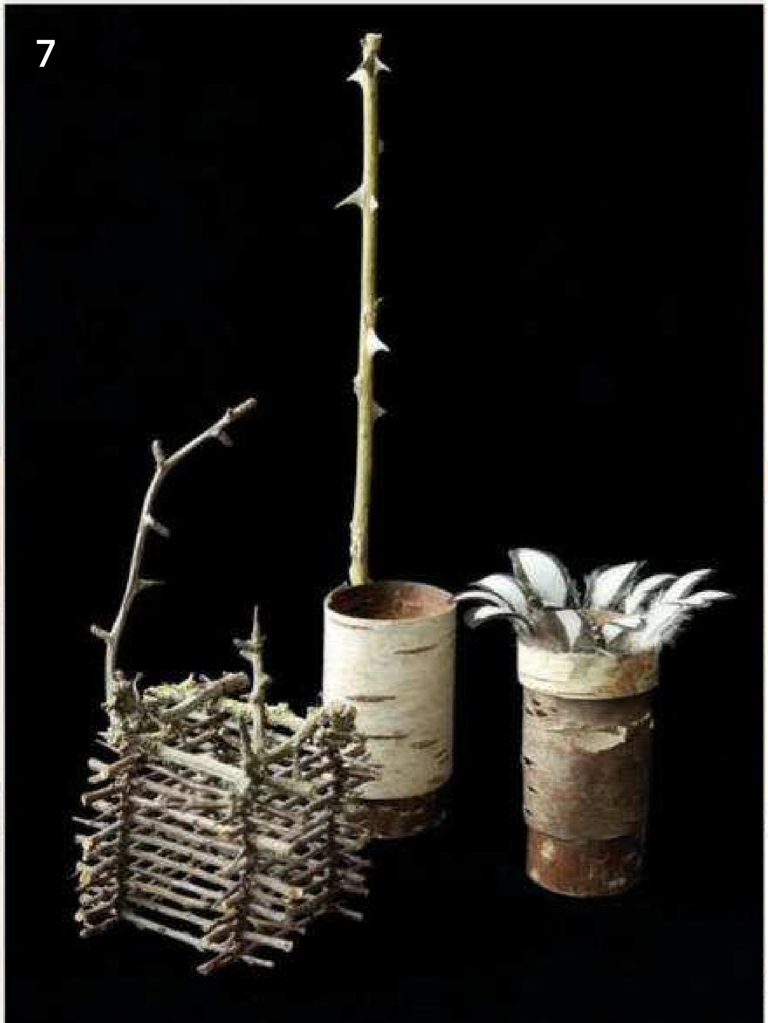
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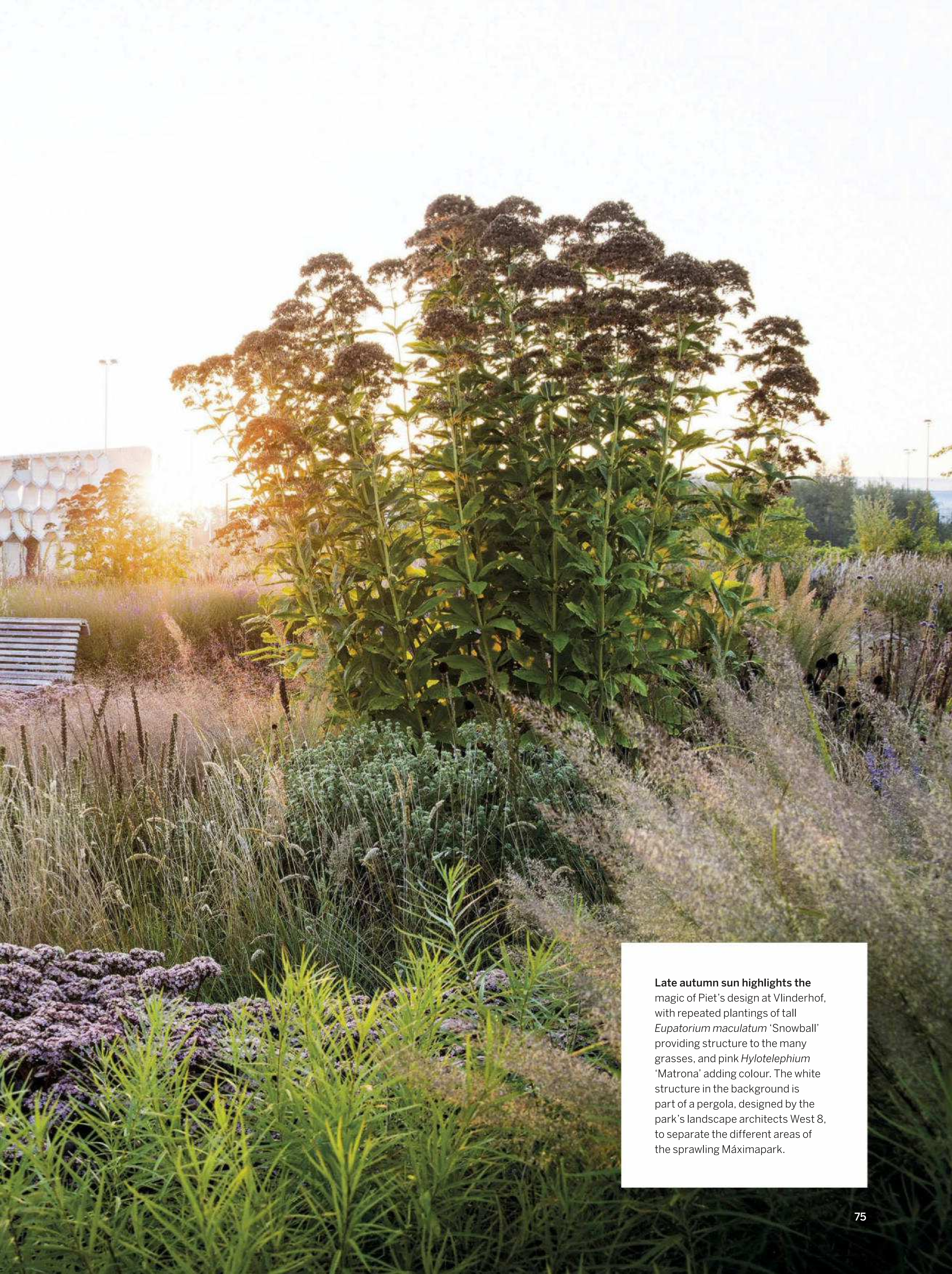
PUBLIC SPIRIT

Piet Oudolf's first public park in the Netherlands has been brought to life through one man's determination and the hard work of a group of volunteers

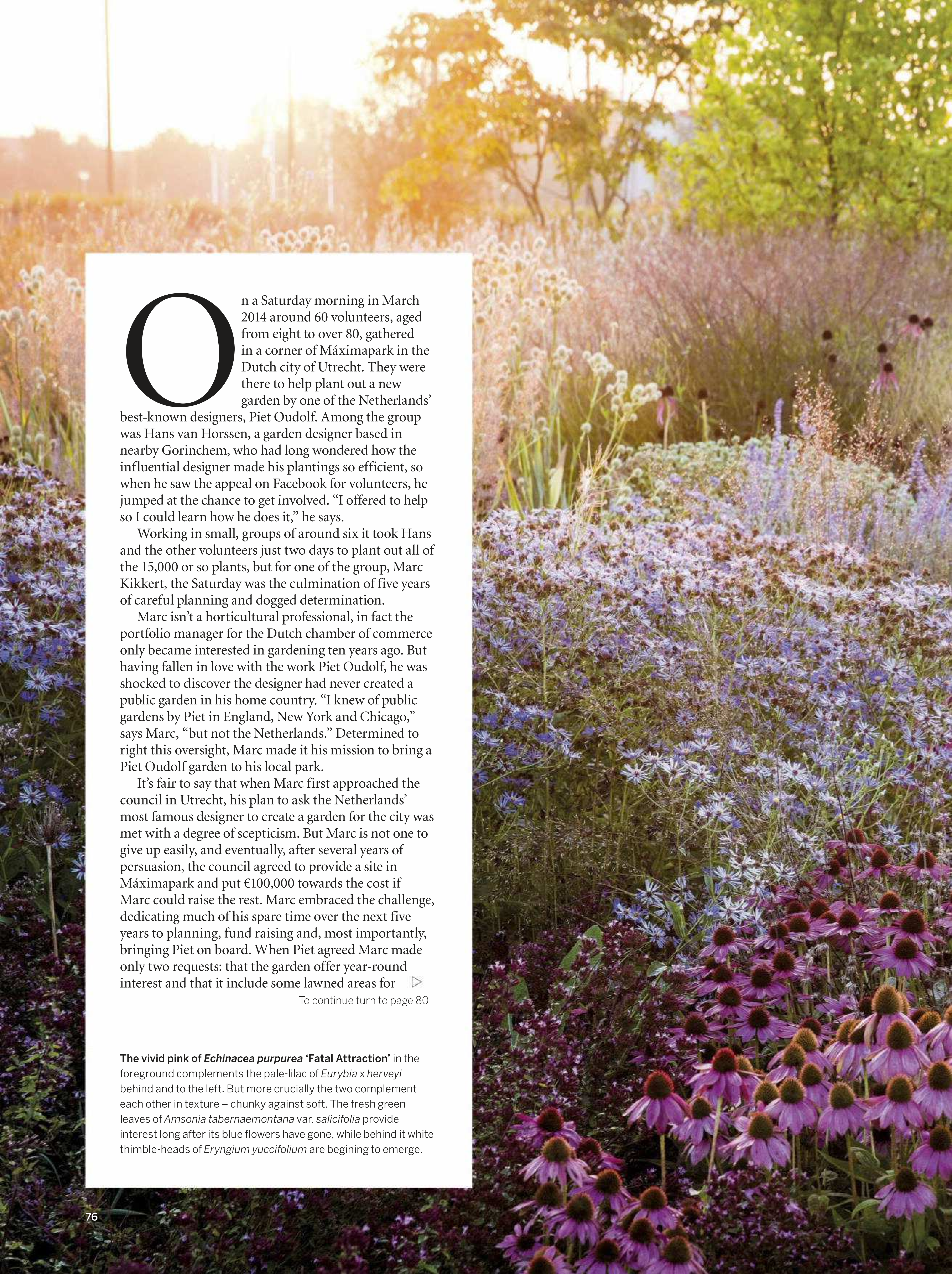
WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

IN BRIEF

Name Vlinderhof.
What A Piet Oudolf-designed garden inside Máximapark public park.
Where Utrecht, the Netherlands.
Size 5,000 square metres.
Soil Clay with added sand and organic matter.
Climate Cool temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8b.



Late autumn sun highlights the magic of Piet's design at Vlinderhof, with repeated plantings of tall *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Snowball' providing structure to the many grasses, and pink *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona' adding colour. The white structure in the background is part of a pergola, designed by the park's landscape architects West 8, to separate the different areas of the sprawling Máximapark.



On a Saturday morning in March 2014 around 60 volunteers, aged from eight to over 80, gathered in a corner of Máximapark in the Dutch city of Utrecht. They were there to help plant out a new garden by one of the Netherlands' best-known designers, Piet Oudolf. Among the group was Hans van Horssen, a garden designer based in nearby Gorinchem, who had long wondered how the influential designer made his plantings so efficient, so when he saw the appeal on Facebook for volunteers, he jumped at the chance to get involved. "I offered to help so I could learn how he does it," he says.

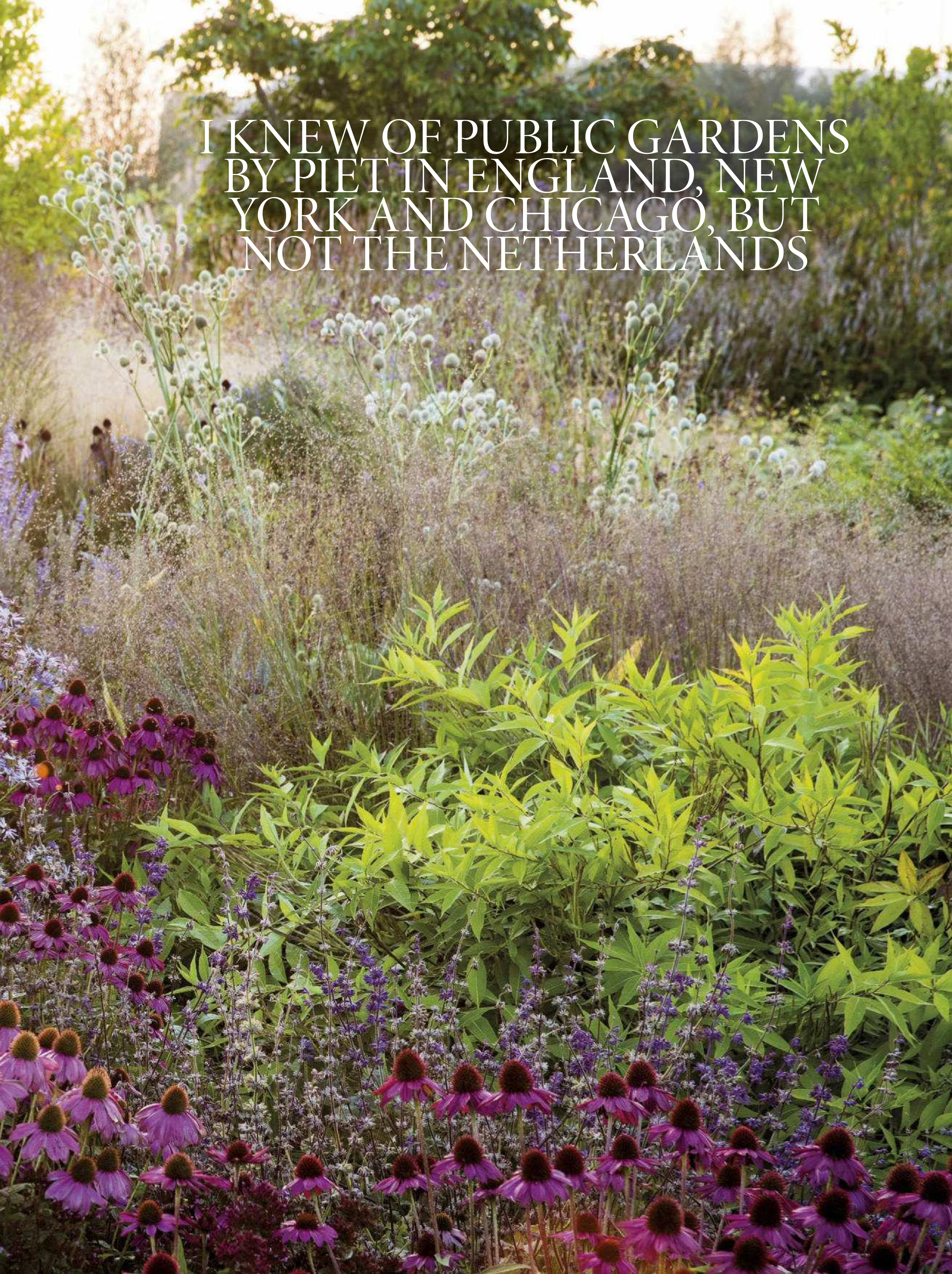
Working in small, groups of around six it took Hans and the other volunteers just two days to plant out all of the 15,000 or so plants, but for one of the group, Marc Kikkert, the Saturday was the culmination of five years of careful planning and dogged determination.

Marc isn't a horticultural professional, in fact the portfolio manager for the Dutch chamber of commerce only became interested in gardening ten years ago. But having fallen in love with the work Piet Oudolf, he was shocked to discover the designer had never created a public garden in his home country. "I knew of public gardens by Piet in England, New York and Chicago," says Marc, "but not the Netherlands." Determined to right this oversight, Marc made it his mission to bring a Piet Oudolf garden to his local park.

It's fair to say that when Marc first approached the council in Utrecht, his plan to ask the Netherlands' most famous designer to create a garden for the city was met with a degree of scepticism. But Marc is not one to give up easily, and eventually, after several years of persuasion, the council agreed to provide a site in Máximapark and put €100,000 towards the cost if Marc could raise the rest. Marc embraced the challenge, dedicating much of his spare time over the next five years to planning, fund raising and, most importantly, bringing Piet on board. When Piet agreed Marc made only two requests: that the garden offer year-round interest and that it include some lawned areas for ▷

To continue turn to page 80

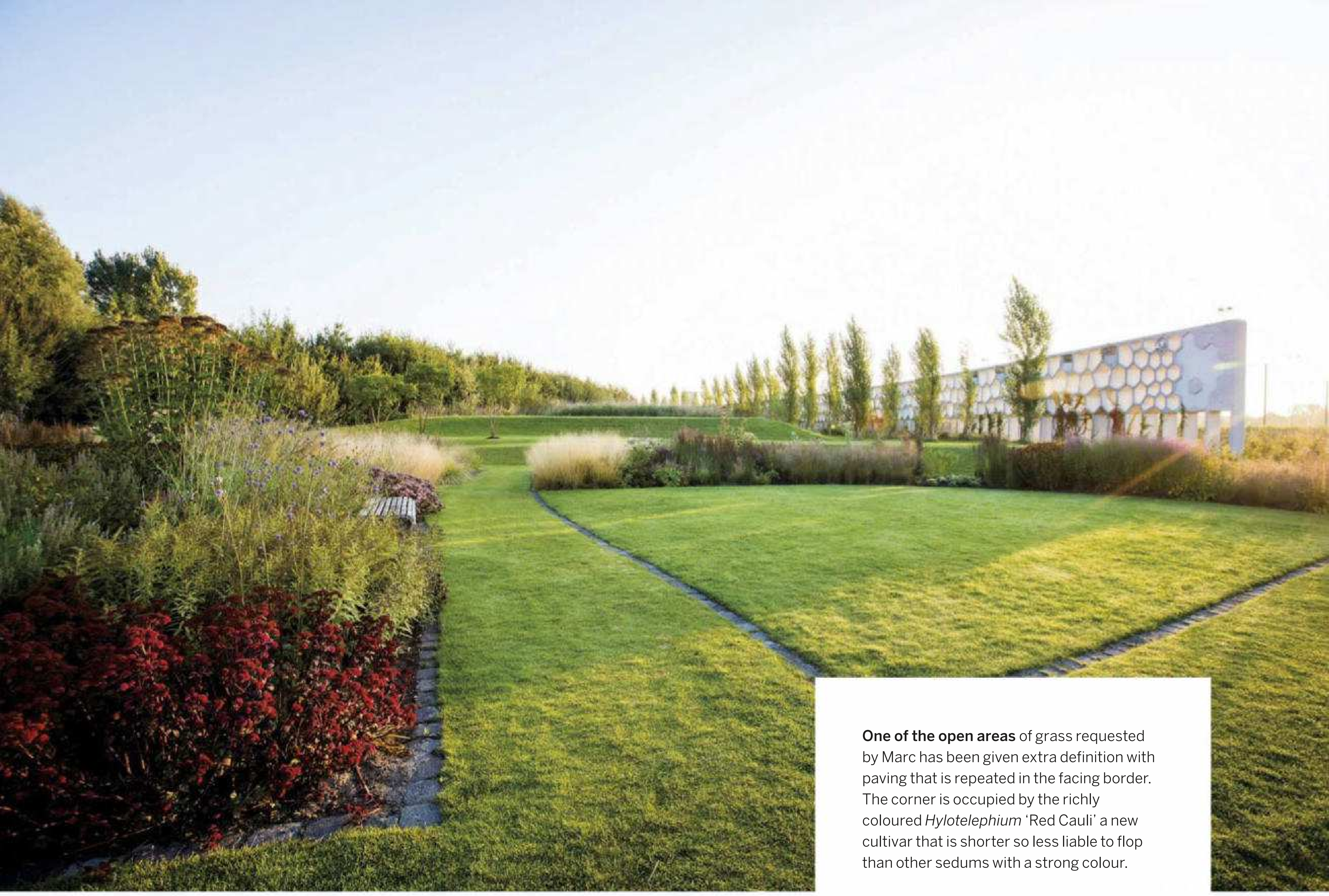
The vivid pink of *Echinacea purpurea* 'Fatal Attraction' in the foreground complements the pale-lilac of *Eurybia* x *herveyi* behind and to the left. But more crucially the two complement each other in texture – chunky against soft. The fresh green leaves of *Amsonia tabernaemontana* var. *salicifolia* provide interest long after its blue flowers have gone, while behind it white thimble-heads of *Eryngium yuccifolium* are begining to emerge.



I KNEW OF PUBLIC GARDENS BY PIET IN ENGLAND, NEW YORK AND CHICAGO, BUT NOT THE NETHERLANDS

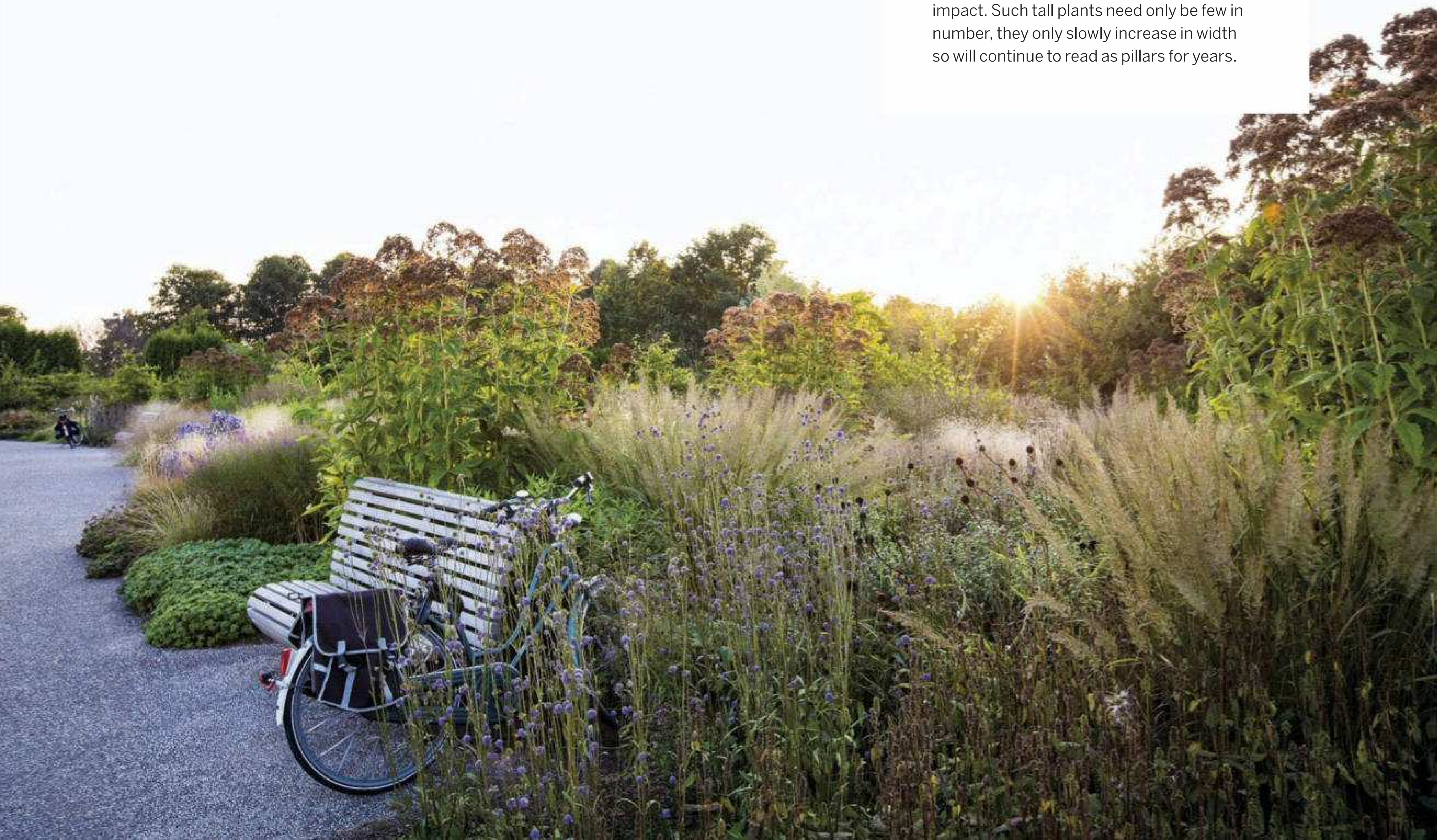
Mown grass paths lead you through the planting. They're wide enough so that visitors can easily explore the garden, but not so wide you feel distant from the planting. One of the most enjoyable aspects of any Piet Oudolf garden is feeling as though you are walking through the plants.

In autumn the planting at Vlinderhof is increasingly dominated by the biscuity tones of grasses, such as *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau', and seedheads, while white *Eryngium yuccifolium*, and the blues of *Perovskia* 'Little Spire' and *Aster tataricus* 'Jindai' provide flashes of colour.



One of the open areas of grass requested by Marc has been given extra definition with paving that is repeated in the facing border. The corner is occupied by the richly coloured *Hylotelephium* 'Red Cauli' a new cultivar that is shorter so less liable to flop than other sedums with a strong colour.

Tall grasses and the giant *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Snowball' help shelter a bench. The difference in height of the eupatorium and the rest of the planting adds to its impact. Such tall plants need only be few in number, they only slowly increase in width so will continue to read as pillars for years.



people to use for picnics and yoga in summer but, otherwise left the ideas to Piet.

The garden, known as Vlinderhof, or butterfly court, eventually opened in May 2014. Made up of 19 different borders, criss-crossed by paths, it offers a cornucopia of plant colours, forms and textures from late summer to autumn. Six of the borders are planted with shade-tolerant plants, but the majority are sun-lovers.

Although Piet has used almost 100 different species and cultivars in Vlinderhof, it is, in common with many of his gardens, dominated by a relatively limited palette of strongly structural species. These repeated structural plants allow for a great deal of variety at a smaller scale while maintaining the big picture, and giving year-round interest. Piet achieves this by dividing most of his plants into three, roughly defined, groups. The first is made up of species that occur in more than ten of the sunny habitat borders. These are those strongly structural plants that look good over a long season, such as *Amsonia hubrichtii* and *Baptisia alba*, and which have foliage that stays attractive until autumn. This group of 21 species makes up around 40 per cent of the total number of individual plants at Vlinderhof.

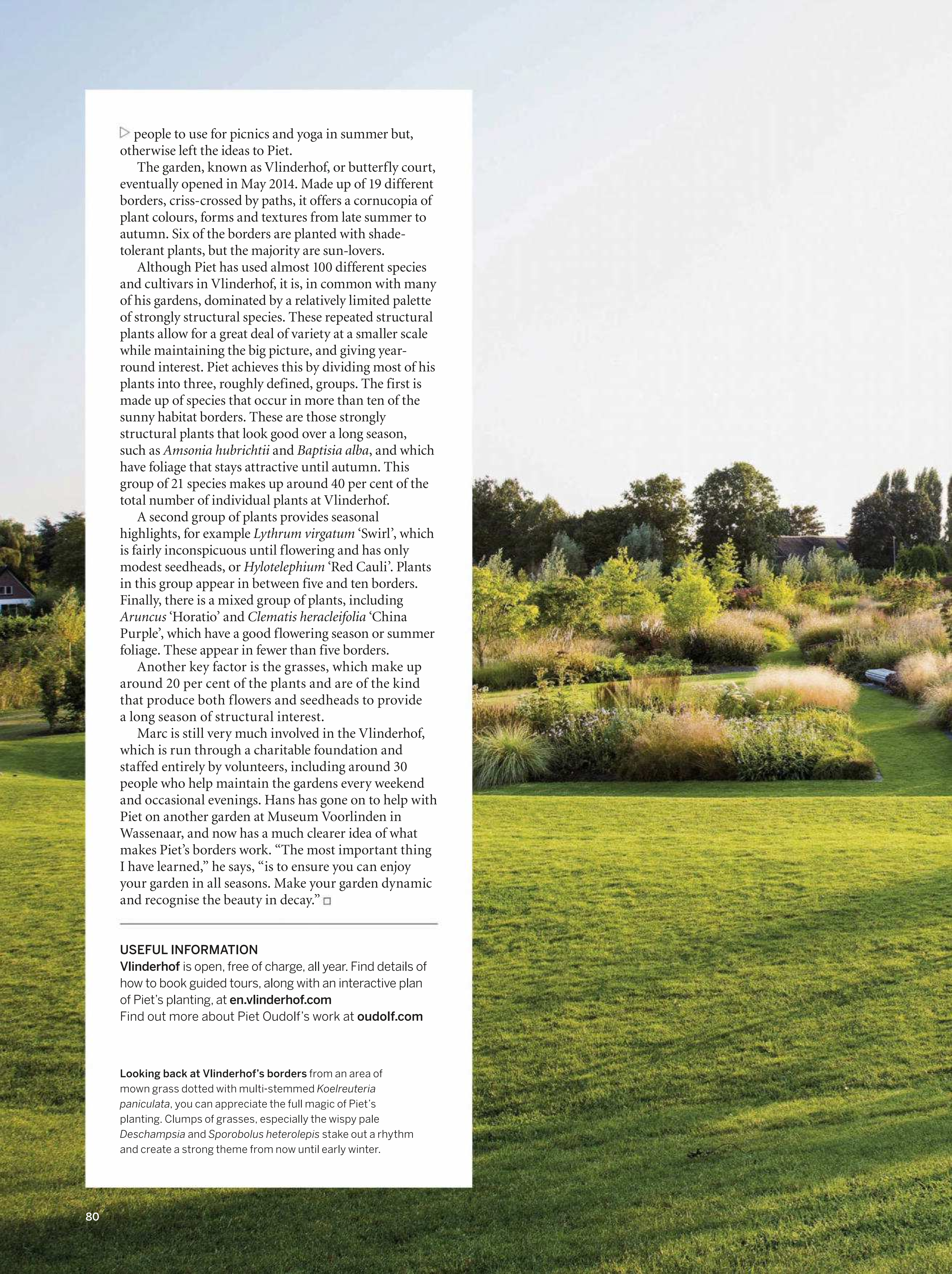
A second group of plants provides seasonal highlights, for example *Lythrum virgatum* 'Swirl', which is fairly inconspicuous until flowering and has only modest seedheads, or *Hylotelephium* 'Red Cauli'. Plants in this group appear in between five and ten borders. Finally, there is a mixed group of plants, including *Aruncus* 'Horatio' and *Clematis heracleifolia* 'China Purple', which have a good flowering season or summer foliage. These appear in fewer than five borders.

Another key factor is the grasses, which make up around 20 per cent of the plants and are of the kind that produce both flowers and seedheads to provide a long season of structural interest.

Marc is still very much involved in the Vlinderhof, which is run through a charitable foundation and staffed entirely by volunteers, including around 30 people who help maintain the gardens every weekend and occasional evenings. Hans has gone on to help with Piet on another garden at Museum Voorlinden in Wassenaar, and now has a much clearer idea of what makes Piet's borders work. "The most important thing I have learned," he says, "is to ensure you can enjoy your garden in all seasons. Make your garden dynamic and recognise the beauty in decay." □

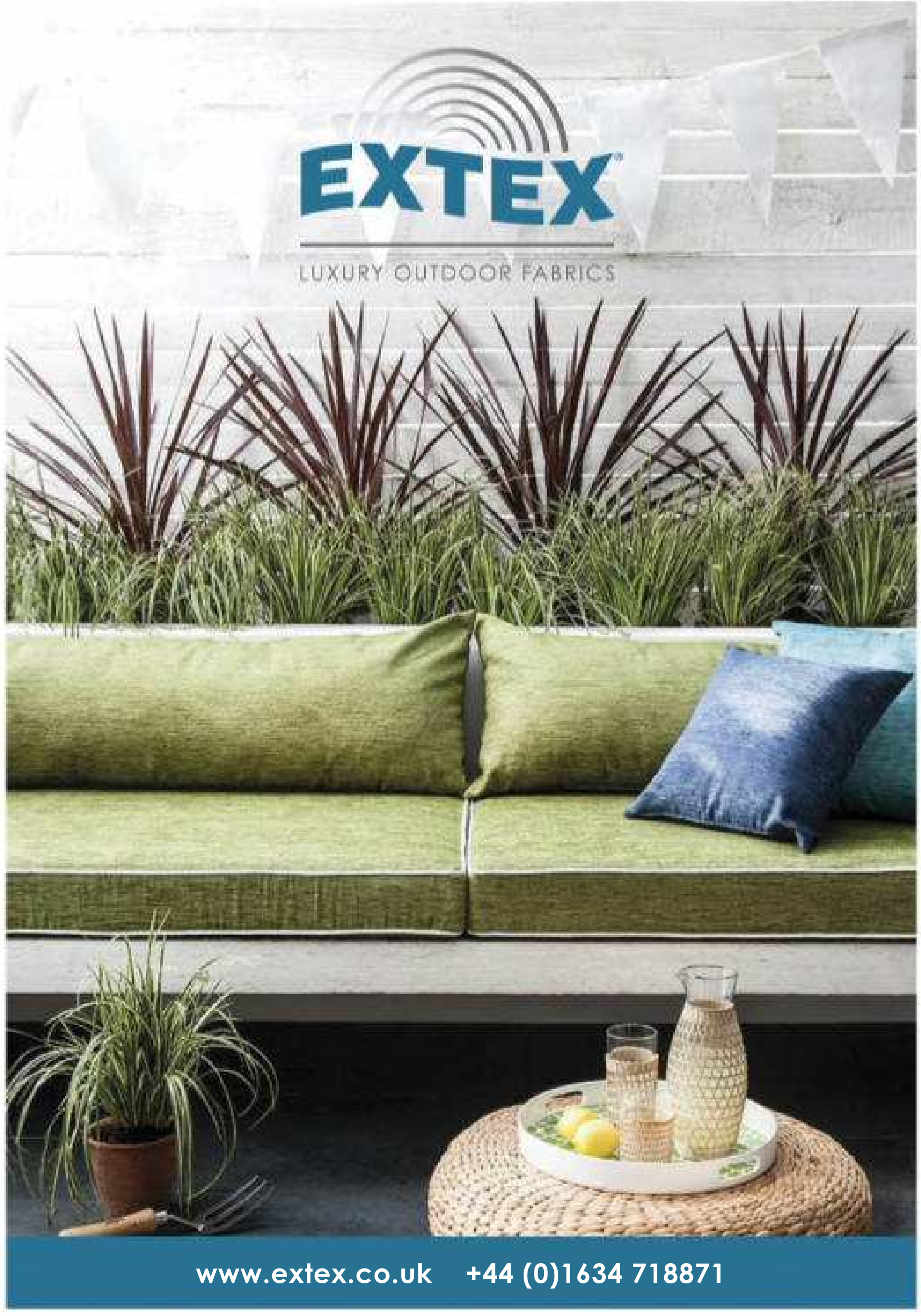
USEFUL INFORMATION

Vlinderhof is open, free of charge, all year. Find details of how to book guided tours, along with an interactive plan of Piet's planting, at **en.vlinderhof.com**
Find out more about Piet Oudolf's work at **oudolf.com**



Looking back at Vlinderhof's borders from an area of mown grass dotted with multi-stemmed *Koelreuteria paniculata*, you can appreciate the full magic of Piet's planting. Clumps of grasses, especially the wispy pale *Deschampsia* and *Sporobolus heterolepis* stake out a rhythm and create a strong theme from now until early winter.

PIET HAS USED ALMOST 100 DIFFERENT PLANT SPECIES AND CULTIVARS IN VLINDERHOF



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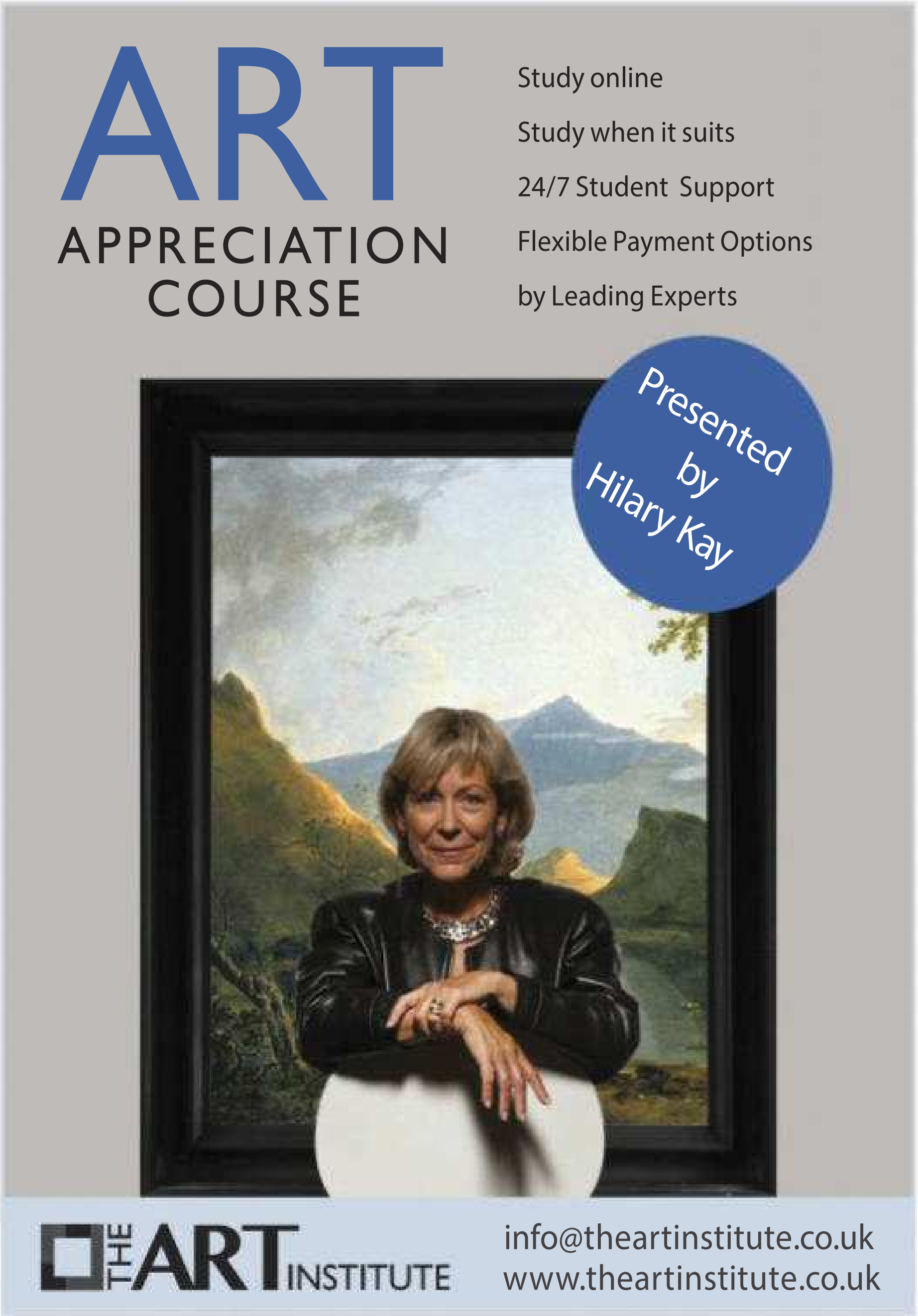

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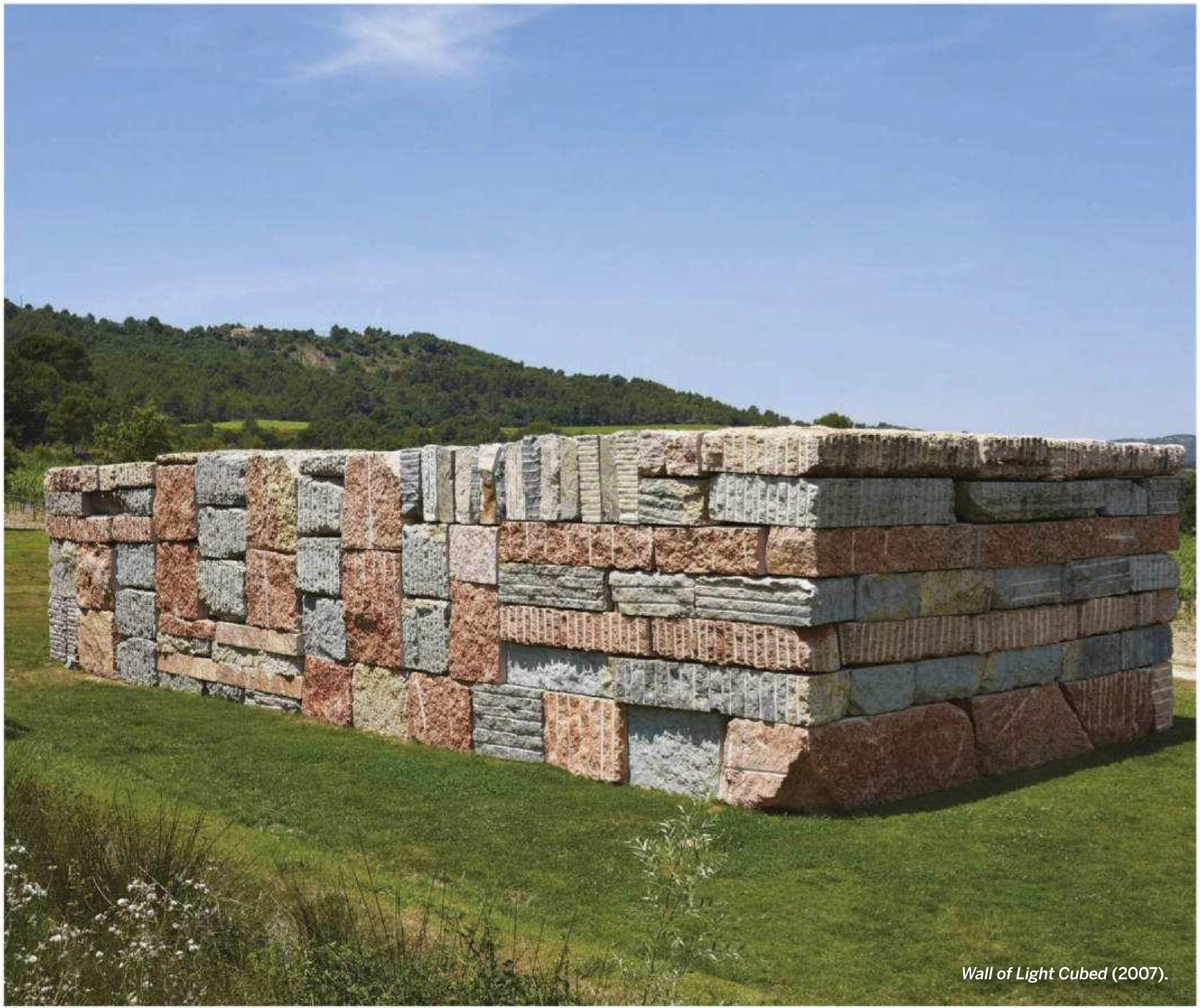
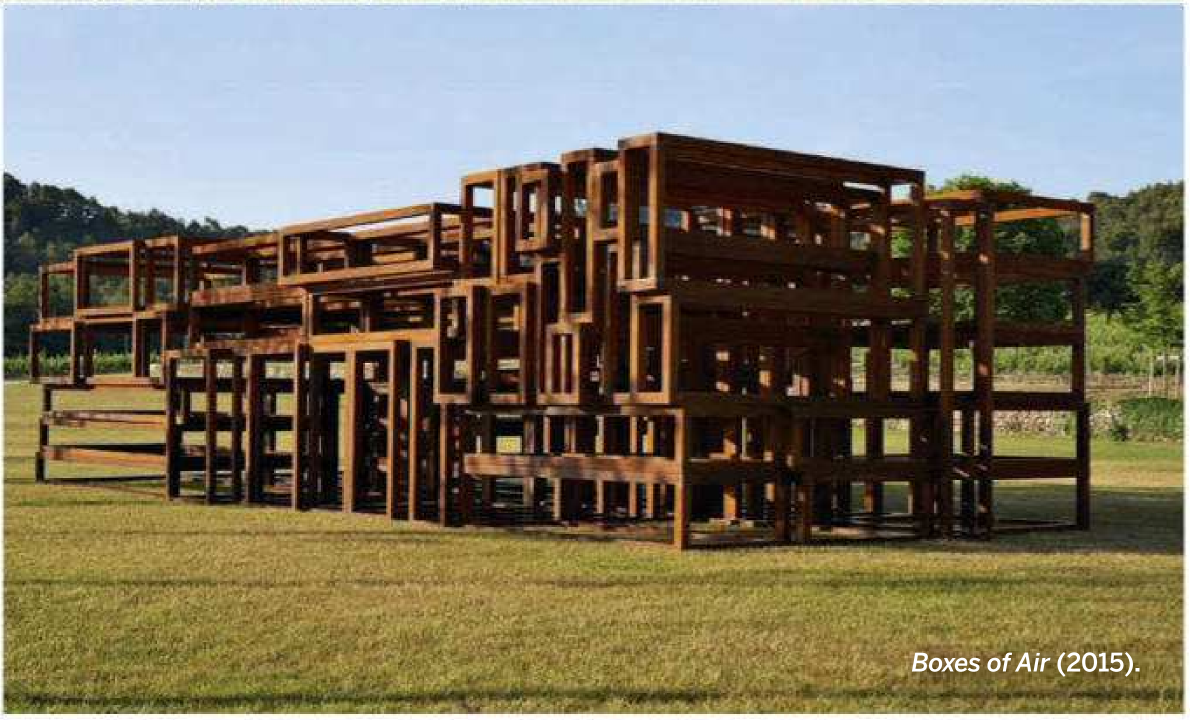


Wall of Light Cubed (2007).

SET IN STONE

A major exhibition at Yorkshire Sculpture Park will bring together a wide collection of work by the Irish-born artist Sean Scully. *Inside Outside* is the abstract artist's largest-ever presentation of sculptures and the first exhibition of both his sculpture and paintings in the UK. Four new major works will make their debut at the exhibition, including the latest in the wall cubed sculptures, inspired by Scully's series of *Wall of Light* paintings from the 1990s. The new piece *Wall Dale Cubed* (2018) will be made from locally quarried Yorkshire stone, and will remain part of the park's collection for the next two years as will *Crate of Air* (2018) made from welded Corten steel.
29 September – 6 January 2019. **ysp.org.uk**



Boxes of Air (2015).

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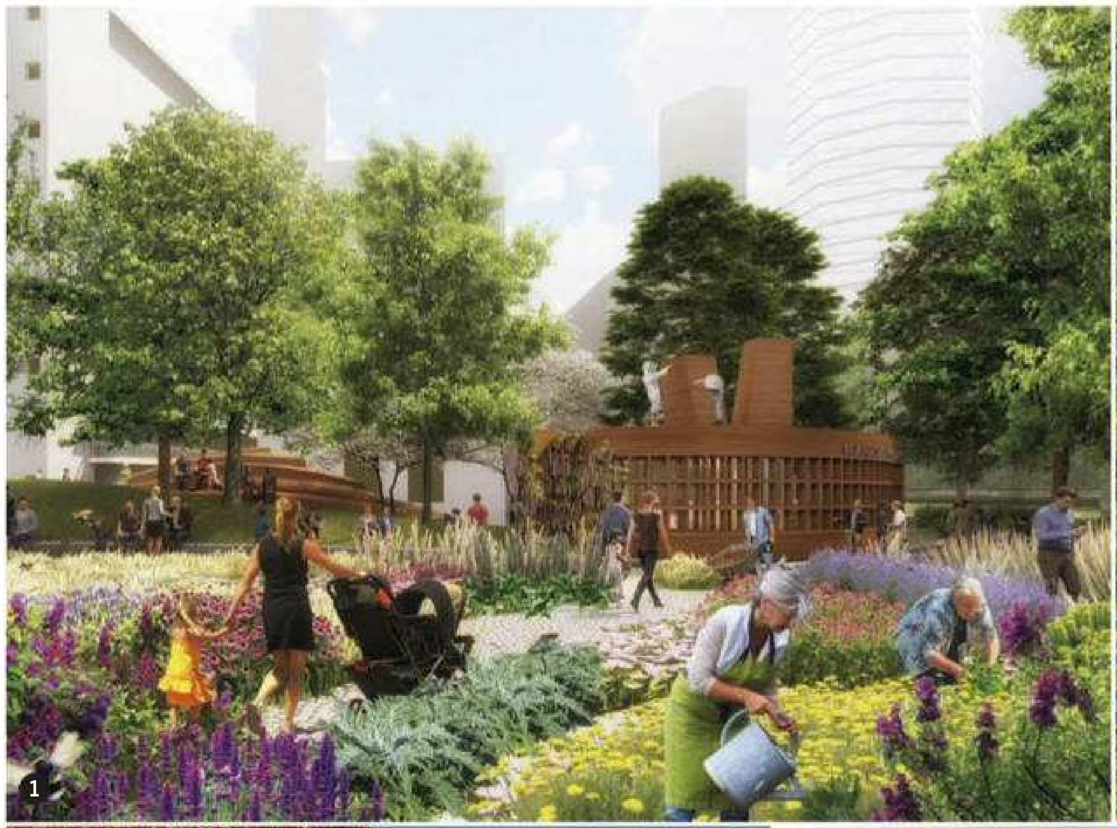
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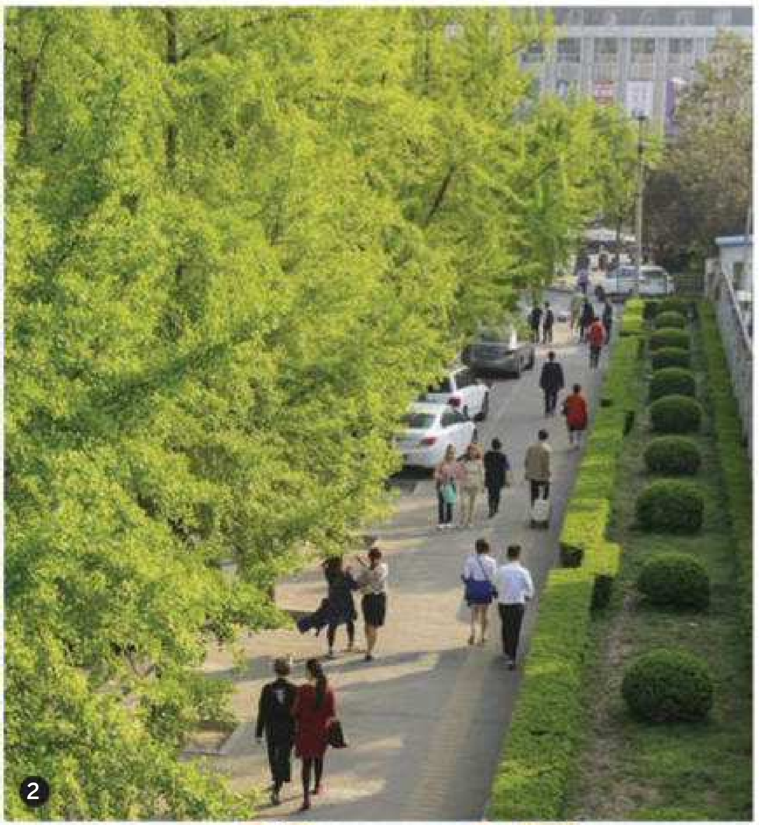
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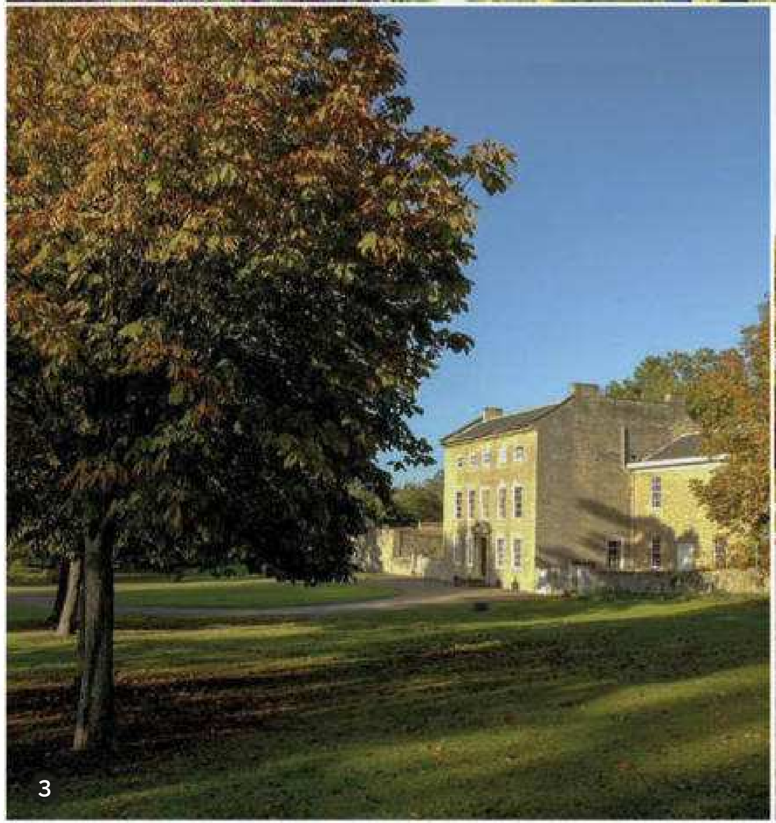
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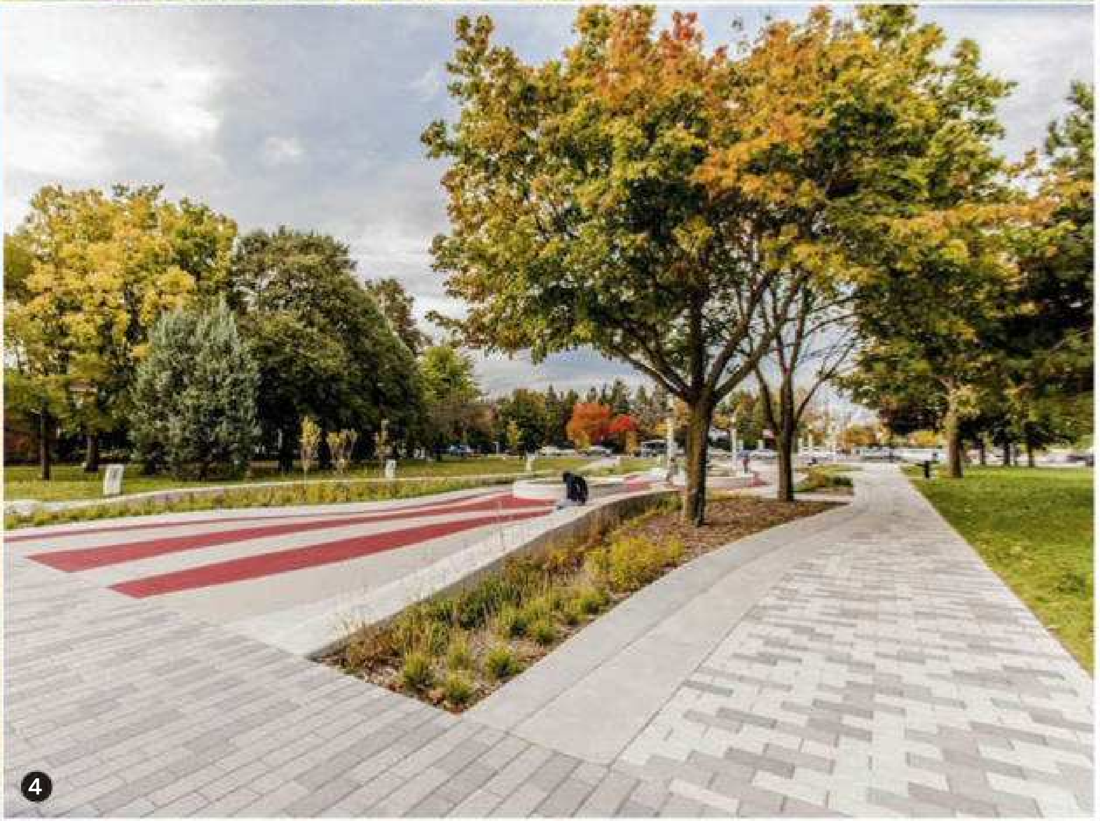
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1 WEST 8; 2 ANDREW BENTON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 GREAT LINFORD MANOR PARK; 4 STEPHANE NAJMAN

① POLLINATOR GARDEN

The Dutch urban design and landscape architecture practice West 8 has won a competition to create a new pollinator-friendly area for the Bernie Spain Garden on London's South Bank. Its Pollinator Garden was chosen from a shortlist of five by the social enterprise owner and manager of the public park, Coin Street Community Builders. A timber and glass pavilion, inspired by a traditional garden shed, will support rooftop beehives, while gently curved seating alcoves will separate the open green space and the inner gardens featuring colourful and scented floral displays. **coinstreet.org**

② URBAN TREES

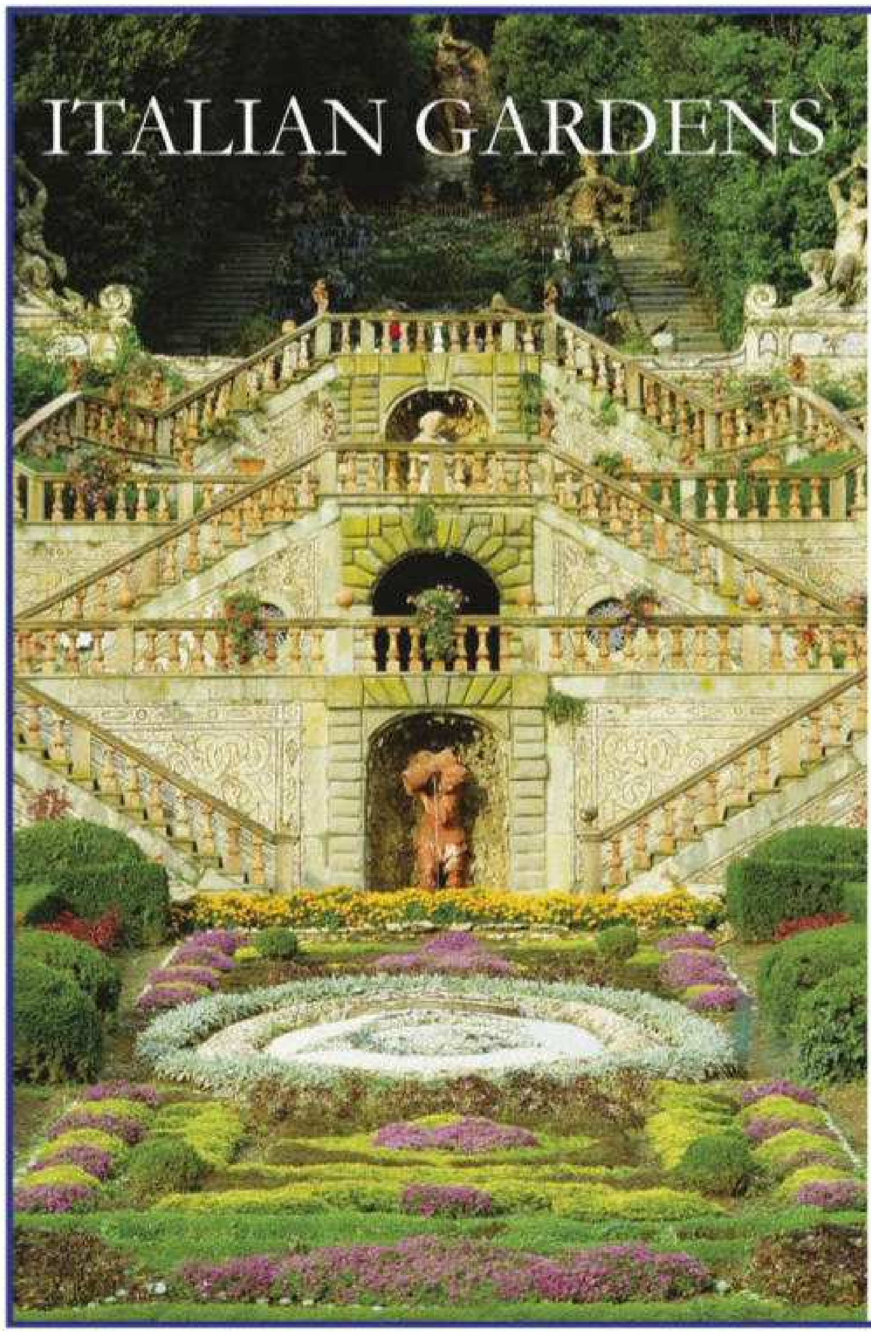
The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG), which aims to increase awareness of the role of trees in built environments, has produced a free downloadable guide to tree species. Written by Andrew Hirons, senior arboricultural lecturer at Myerscough College, and Henrik Sjöman, scientific curator of Gothenburg Botanical Garden, *Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A Guide for Specifiers* provides information on more than 280 tree species, including *Ginkgo biloba*, shown above, to help designers find the most appropriate tree for an urban site. The guide includes 800 photos and a tree-planning tool. **tdag.org.uk**

③ GREAT LINFORD PARK RESTORATION

A restoration of the 18th-century parkland landscape of Great Linford Manor Park in Milton Keynes now has the go-ahead, thanks to £3.1 million funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund. This will include ponds, cascades, wildflower meadows and the Wilderness Garden – believed to be the work of Richard Woods, a contemporary of 'Capability' Brown. Accessibility to the old limestone quarry will also be improved. The Friends of Great Linford Manor Park group has been set up to organise events and restoration work will start in 2019. **theparkstrust.com/parks/great-linford-manor-park**

④ MONTREAL PARK

As part of the celebrations to mark the 375th anniversary of French settlers arriving in Montreal, a busy road intersection in the city's centre has been transformed into a tranquil green space for pedestrians and cyclists. Parc Guido-Nincheri, named in honour of the celebrated Italian-born Canadian artist, was designed by landscape architects civiliti, and is part of a larger urban scheme. The inspiration for the central thoroughfare was the contours of a tree trunk cut lengthways, with undulating red lines to represent the flow of sap and seating to mirror knots in the wood, while the pattern of the paved borders suggests the tree's bark. **espacepourlavie.ca/en**



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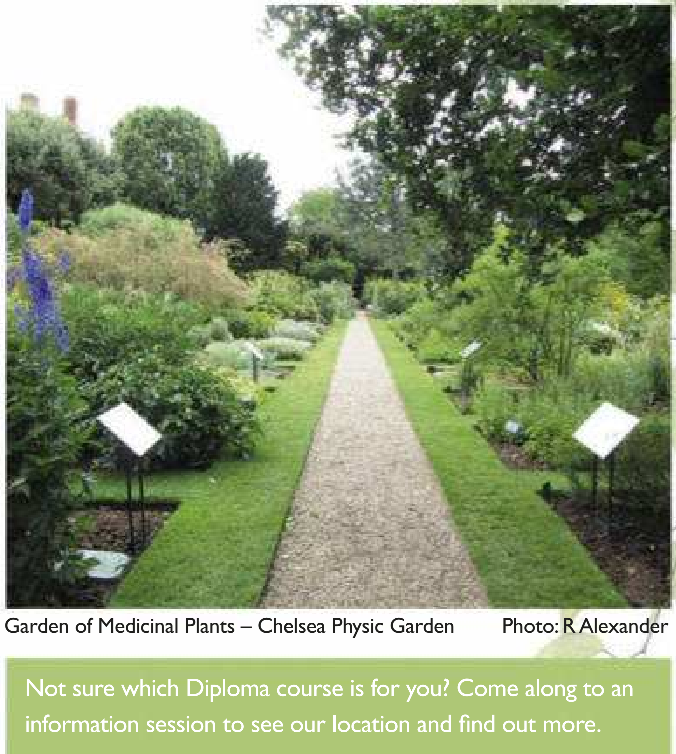

Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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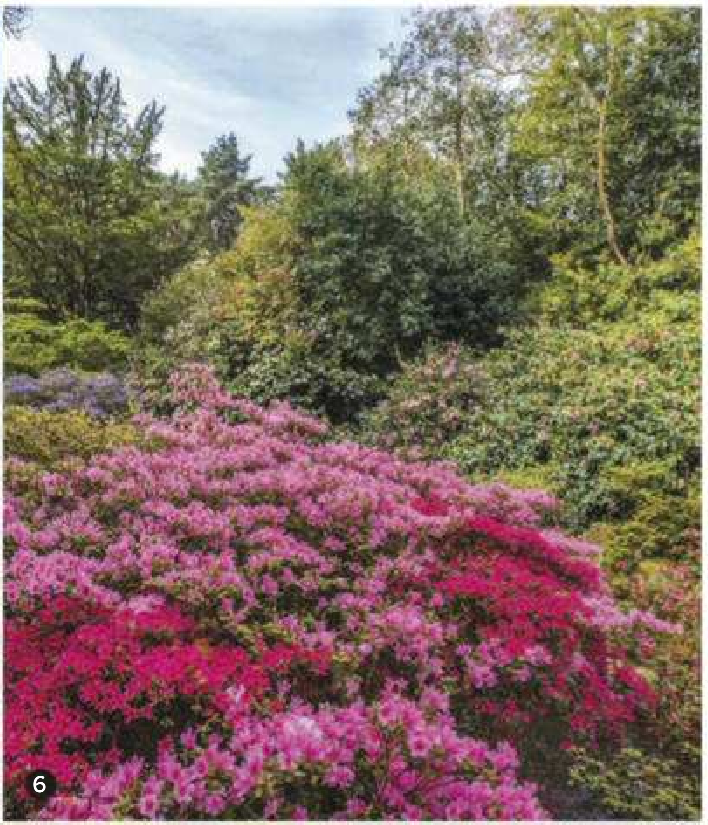
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⑤ MELBOURNE'S PARLIAMENT HOUSE

A new AU$40 million extension to Victoria's Parliament House in Melbourne has opened with a new roof garden that celebrates Australia's indigenous landscapes. The pincer-shaped structure by Peter Elliott Architecture and Urban Design, with landscaping by TCL, is largely sunk below ground to protect existing trees and maintain views. It leads to a colonnaded courtyard garden with sloping lawn and beds created from more than 12,000 plants. The rooftop garden by Paul Thompson covers the building and is planted with a mosaic of native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. **parliament.vic.gov.au**

⑥ RESTORATION PROJECT

Bodnant Garden's 20-acre Furnace Wood and Meadow has won Best Gardens Restoration Project at Horticulture Week's Custodian Awards 2018. The ten-year project rejuvenated the historic collection of Asian shrubs, restored forgotten vistas and the Penjerrick Walk, originally planted by Henry McLaren, 2nd Lord Aberconway in the 1920s. The walk has been re-established with a more sheltered 100m-route, featuring around 40 of the rare, creamy-white *Rhododendron* 'Penjerrick' that give it its name, interplanted with purple-flowering *R. augustinii* and pink *R.* 'Rêve d'Amour'. **nationaltrust.org.uk**

⑦ 2018 NATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS

Boston-based Mikyoung Kim Design, which specialises in restorative landscapes, such as the Crown Sky Garden for the Ann & Robert Lurie Children's Hospital, Chicago (shown), won the Landscape Architecture category at the 2018 Cooper Hewitt National Design Awards. The awards also honoured Anne Whiston Spirn, author of *The Granite Garden* and professor of landscape architecture and planning at MIT, who this year was also presented with the Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award from the International Federation of Landscape Architects in recognition of her pioneering work in urban ecology. **cooperhewitt.org**

⑧ BALINESE HOME

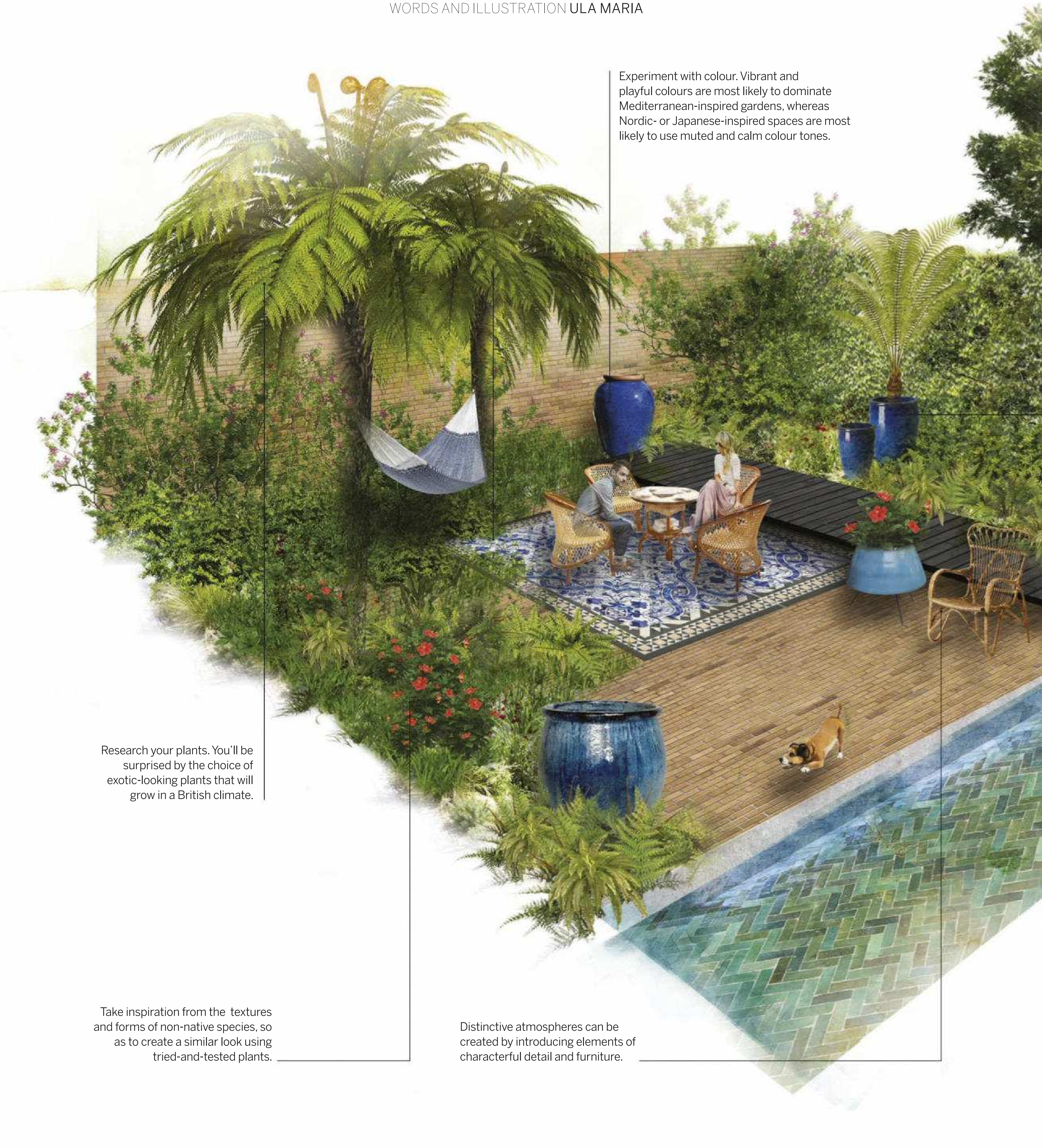
A house overlooking dense forest in the southwest coastal area of Bali has been given been given an unusual green roof that helps blur the boundaries between natural and built environments. The fast-growing, evergreen creeper *Tarlmounia elliptica*, drapes down from the roof of the multi-level home to form a natural screen and provide a cooling effect for the floors below. Social areas are open to the elements while screening for bathrooms is provided by stands of bamboo. The Balinese-based architecture practice Word of Mouth has also minimised the home's carbon footprint, using sustainable materials. **wordofmouthbali.com**

5 TCL PETER ELLIOT, JOHN GOLLINGS; 6 MIKE DEAN / EYE IMAGERY; 7 MIKYOUNG KIM DESIGN; 8 DANIEL KOH

CAPTURING A SENSE OF PLACE

As we return to normality from our summer breaks to exotic places, Ula Maria encourages us to bring some garden design ideas back from our travels

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION ULA MARIA



Experiment with colour. Vibrant and playful colours are most likely to dominate Mediterranean-inspired gardens, whereas Nordic- or Japanese-inspired spaces are most likely to use muted and calm colour tones.

Research your plants. You'll be surprised by the choice of exotic-looking plants that will grow in a British climate.

Take inspiration from the textures and forms of non-native species, so as to create a similar look using tried-and-tested plants.

Distinctive atmospheres can be created by introducing elements of characterful detail and furniture.

Ula Maria
is an award-winning garden designer, landscape architect and illustrator. She was named the RHS Young Designer of the Year in 2017.

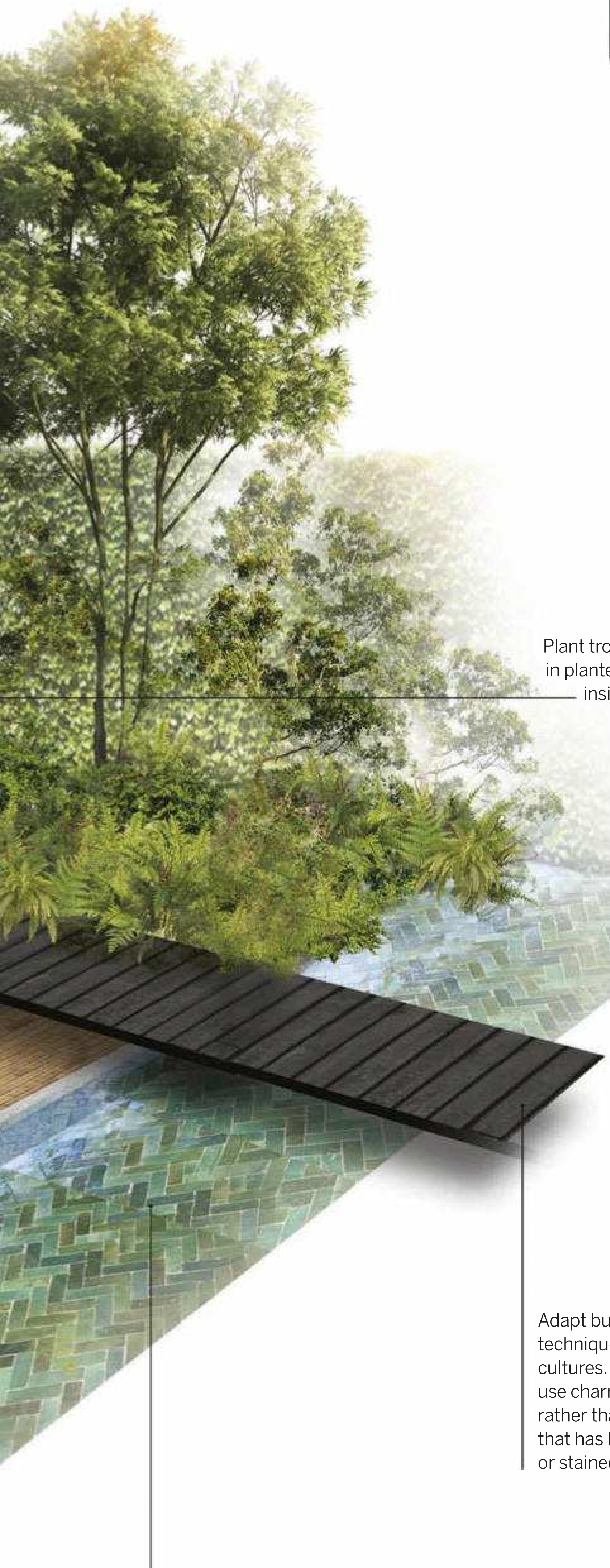
Certain places can make the heart flutter and the imagination soar. Every time I travel, I return feeling inspired by the locations visited, be it by the sun-dappled woodlands in the Welsh countryside, miniature French courtyards, or the bricolage streets of Sri Lanka. We all have at least one special place somewhere in the world that has left an indelible imprint and awakened a feeling of belonging as strong as that of our own home.

I remember the very first time my grandmother took me to visit the Winter Garden in Kretinga, in my home country of Lithuania, on a rainy and dull autumn day. It felt like stepping into another world, a tropical paradise filled with theatrical flowers and giant-leaved plants, leaving the cold day behind the door. It had a magical effect on me, and I can still vividly sense the humidity and scent of wet flora. It showcased how certain spaces can be designed to allow escape from our everyday surroundings and transport us somewhere completely different without travelling halfway across the world.

CAPTURING THE IMAGINATION

Most of the places that have the power to capture our imagination have history and authenticity at their core. They have evolved over time and have been shaped by various events that enriched them with layers of history and character. Places such as these have a magical aura around them that is difficult to define. It is a challenging task to try and create a garden that would trigger a similar emotional response when all you have to begin with is a blank canvas, an empty patch of land. Trying to replicate an exact copy of Jardin Majorelle in Marrakech or Shalimar Gardens in Lahore in your very own space will never radiate the same atmosphere as you would experience in these locations. In fact, they are more likely to look artificial and superimposed on their surroundings. It is an often overlooked fact that the very same colours and textures used in these exotic sunny gardens never look the same when taken out of their original context and exposed to different levels of light, and a foreign climate and flora. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't use them as your prime design inspiration. I believe trying to capture the sense of a certain place, and the way it makes you feel, is most important rather than an exact recreation of it. Observe your surroundings and try to note glimpses of the existing colour palette, and don't be afraid to experiment with the colours that inspired you in the first place, to see how well they work together. Don't forget that sometimes all it takes is the introduction of elements of characterful detail or distinctive furniture to create a different dynamic.

> *I BELIEVE TRYING TO CAPTURE THE FLAIR AND AURA OF A CERTAIN PLACE IS MOST IMPORTANT*



Plant tropical or unusual plants in planters that can be brought inside during cold winters.

Adapt building techniques from other cultures. For example, use charred timber rather than timber that has been painted or stained.

Take inspiration from patterns and textures found on travels.

TECHNIQUES RATHER THAN OBJECTS

Naturally, we are all drawn to different types of landscapes, whether that is a tropical forest, the Mediterranean coast, or an alpine mountainside, and although we can't bring these home with us from our travels, we can learn from the ways these landscapes have been tamed and celebrated by those who live in them. Every country and culture has its own traditions of finding, treating and using materials in authentic and unique ways, particular to the locations from which they originate.

For example, in Japan, they use the ancient technique of *shou sugi ban,* where timber is charred in order to make it

▷

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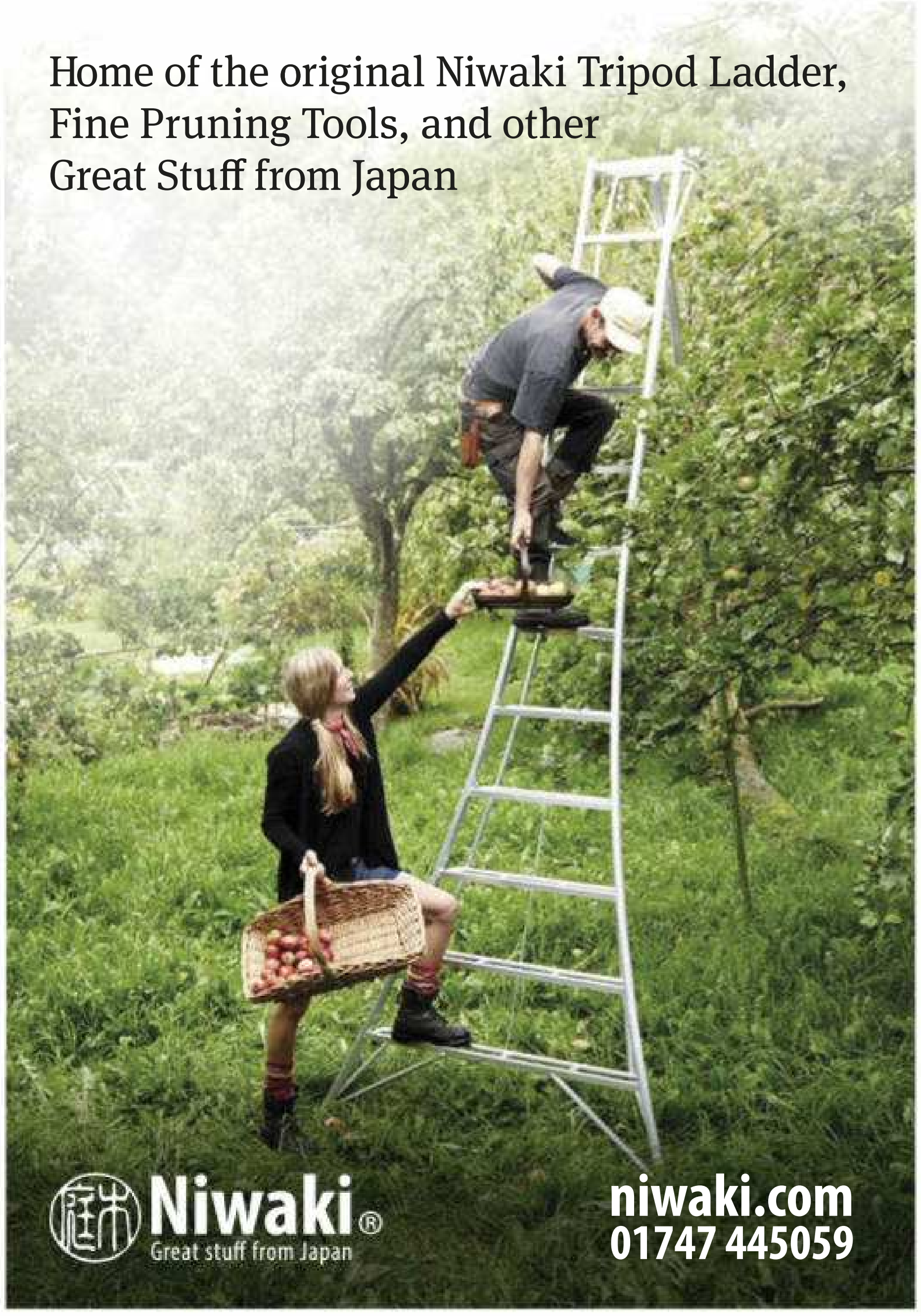

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▷ more durable for use indoors and out, as well as achieving a mesmerisingly distinctive dark satin finish. In Egypt and China the technique of building structures out of rammed earth has been used for centuries. Modern technology means that it can now be used as a durable and sustainable option in our climate and it can work well as an attractive way of building walls and small structures in contemporary gardens. The Maltese carve natural water pools out of the soft sedimentary rocks that compose most of the island, showcasing their skill to shape this easy-to-work natural material in beautiful ways we don't often see elsewhere. By learning from these traditional techniques and interpreting them in ways appropriate to our environments, we can enrich our spaces with character, culture, and the stories behind them.

CURIOUS GARDENS

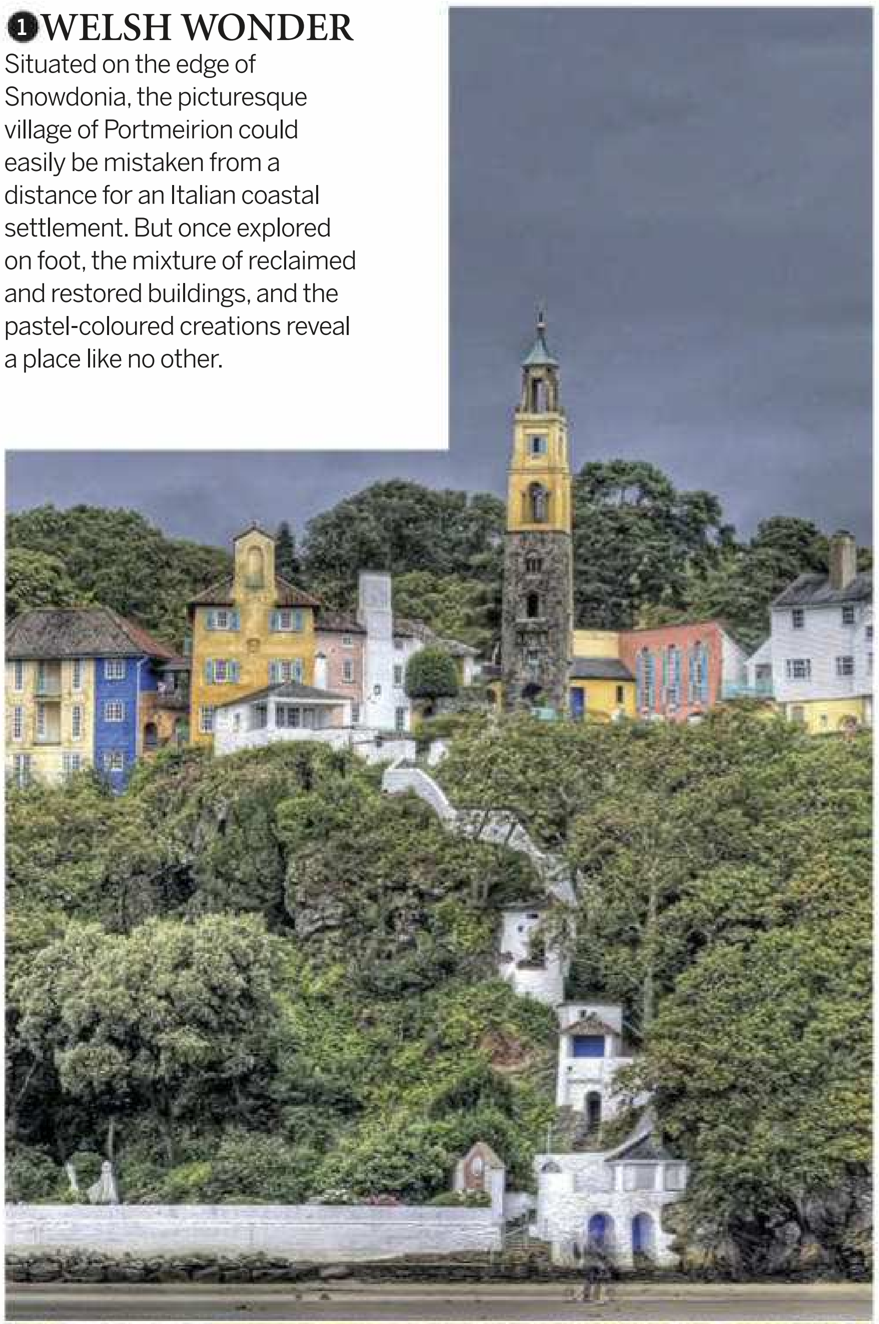
If you ask any garden designer, they will tell you that 'a garden is never finished', which makes the garden designer's job rather tricky, but also very exciting. It allows for change over time, whether through subtle alterations or a sweeping re-design. It's an exhilarating proposal for collectors and designers who take inspiration from locations they have visited, and don't like to restrict themselves to a single theme. Of course, it requires a great skill and attention to detail to create a unified garden assembled from diverse styles and collectors' items; but if done right, the result can be the most fascinating and imaginative space.

One example of a place that has an indescribable other-worldliness about it must surely be the Mediterranean-inspired village of Portmeirion – perhaps best known as the setting for the cult 1960s TV series *The Prisoner* – on the north Wales coast. Portmeirion's creator, the architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, called it 'a home for fallen buildings' as he liked to incorporate salvaged pieces from demolition sites. It's also a place where a giant domed statue of Buddha, an Art Deco lido, an Italian Renaissance dome and a Grade II-listed colonnade sit seamlessly side by side, transporting visitors to a magical place that is unlike anywhere else in the world. Portmeirion is a bricolage of styles and places, architectural details, sculptures and plants from all around the world. Against all odds, these eccentric combinations come together into one coalesced picture unified by pastel colours, playful shapes and its serene coastal landscape. On a summer's day, as you wander through the higgledy-piggledy streets of Italianate Portmeirion exploring its fairytale creations beneath a clear-blue sky you could easily forget that you are in north Wales.

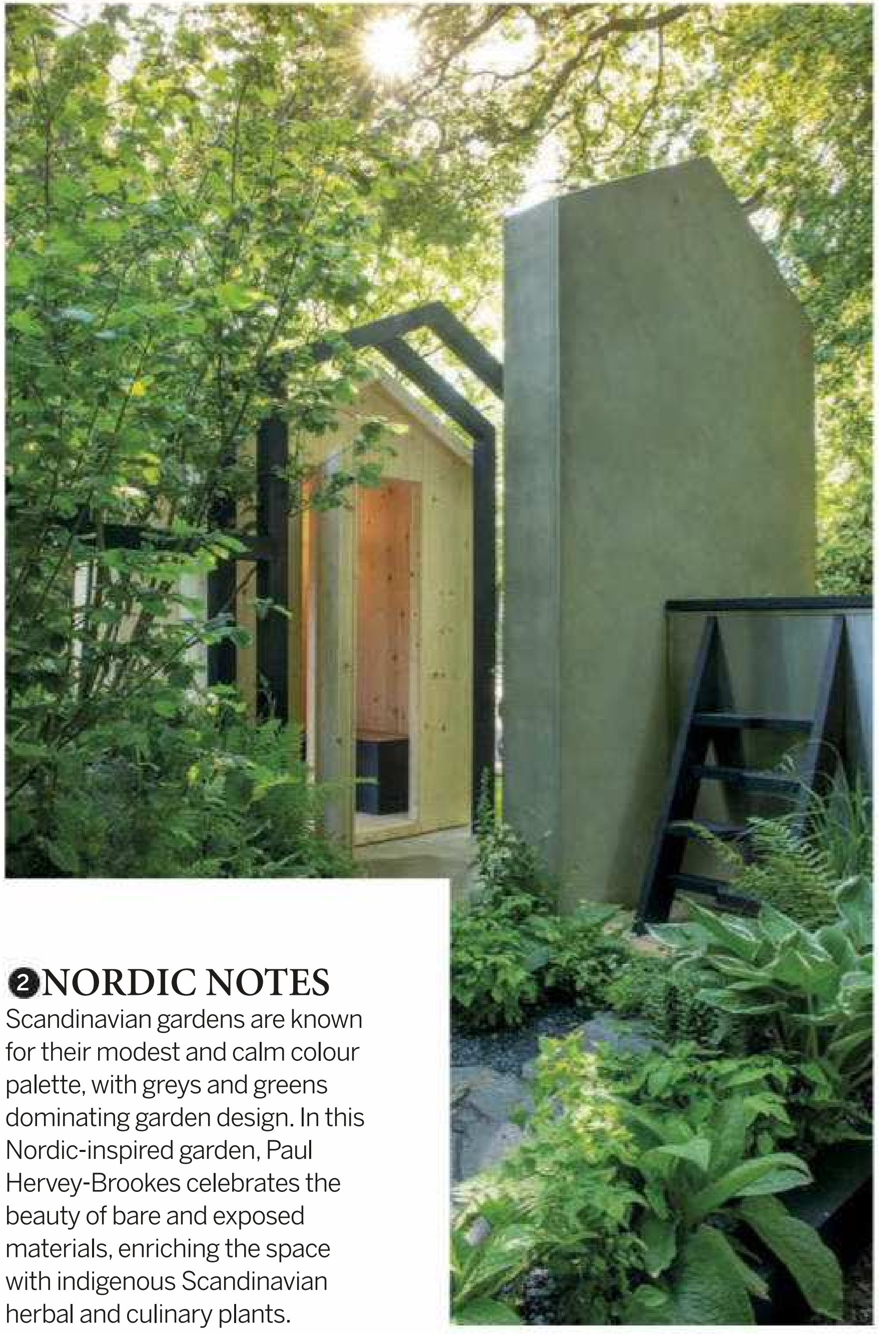
> *THERE'S SO MUCH JOY IN FINDING INSPIRATION FROM YOUR TRAVELS AND BRINGING IT HOME*

There's so much joy to be had in taking inspiration from your travels – no matter how near or far – and bringing those ideas home. Sometimes, many years after you have visited a place, you will come across something that will trigger a memory of that place, and that memory will provide you with a spark of an idea. Inspiration comes in many forms, so it is important always to keep your mind and eyes open. Once we craft the art of interpreting the colours, materials and patterns seen abroad into different settings, we unlock the door of discovering and creating garden worlds of our own; unique places, made up of memories and experiences from our travels, that are unlike anywhere else in the world. □

NEXT MONTH How to give your garden a personal touch.



❶**WELSH WONDER**
Situated on the edge of Snowdonia, the picturesque village of Portmeirion could easily be mistaken from a distance for an Italian coastal settlement. But once explored on foot, the mixture of reclaimed and restored buildings, and the pastel-coloured creations reveal a place like no other.



❷**NORDIC NOTES**
Scandinavian gardens are known for their modest and calm colour palette, with greys and greens dominating garden design. In this Nordic-inspired garden, Paul Hervey-Brookes celebrates the beauty of bare and exposed materials, enriching the space with indigenous Scandinavian herbal and culinary plants.

1 STUART CRUMP HDR / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 2 MMG / BENNET SMITH, THE VIKING CRUISES WELLNESS GARDEN, RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2018 / DESIGN: PAUL HERVEY-BROOKES

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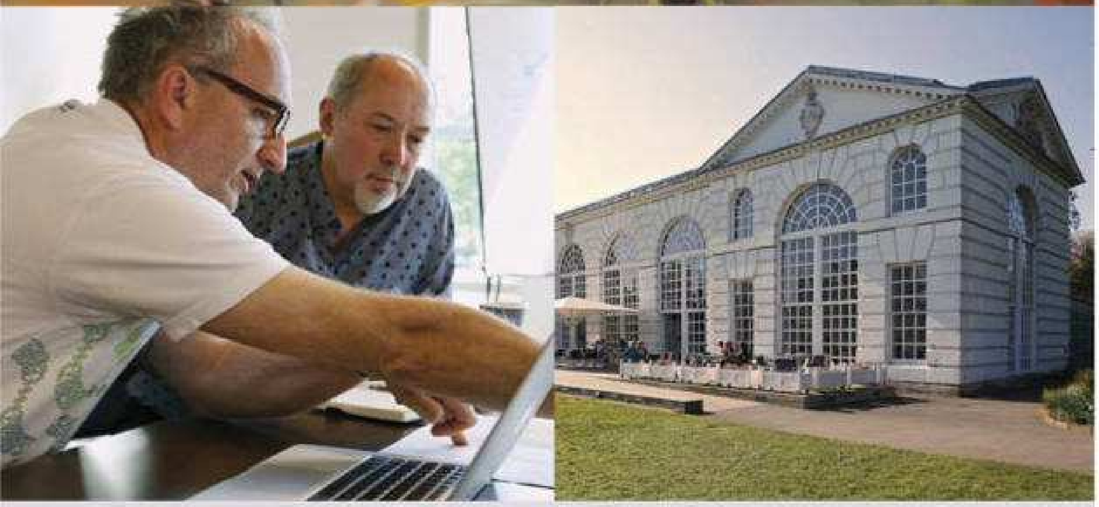

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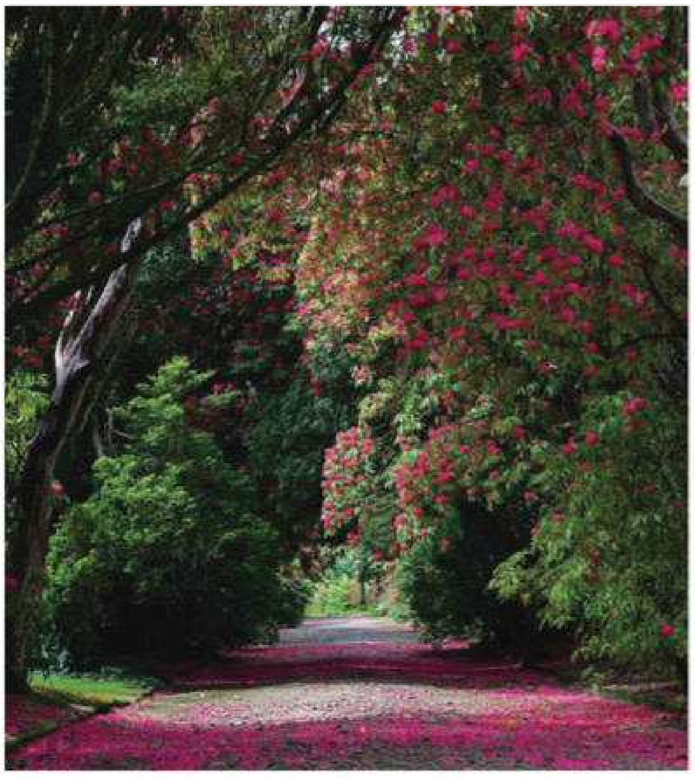

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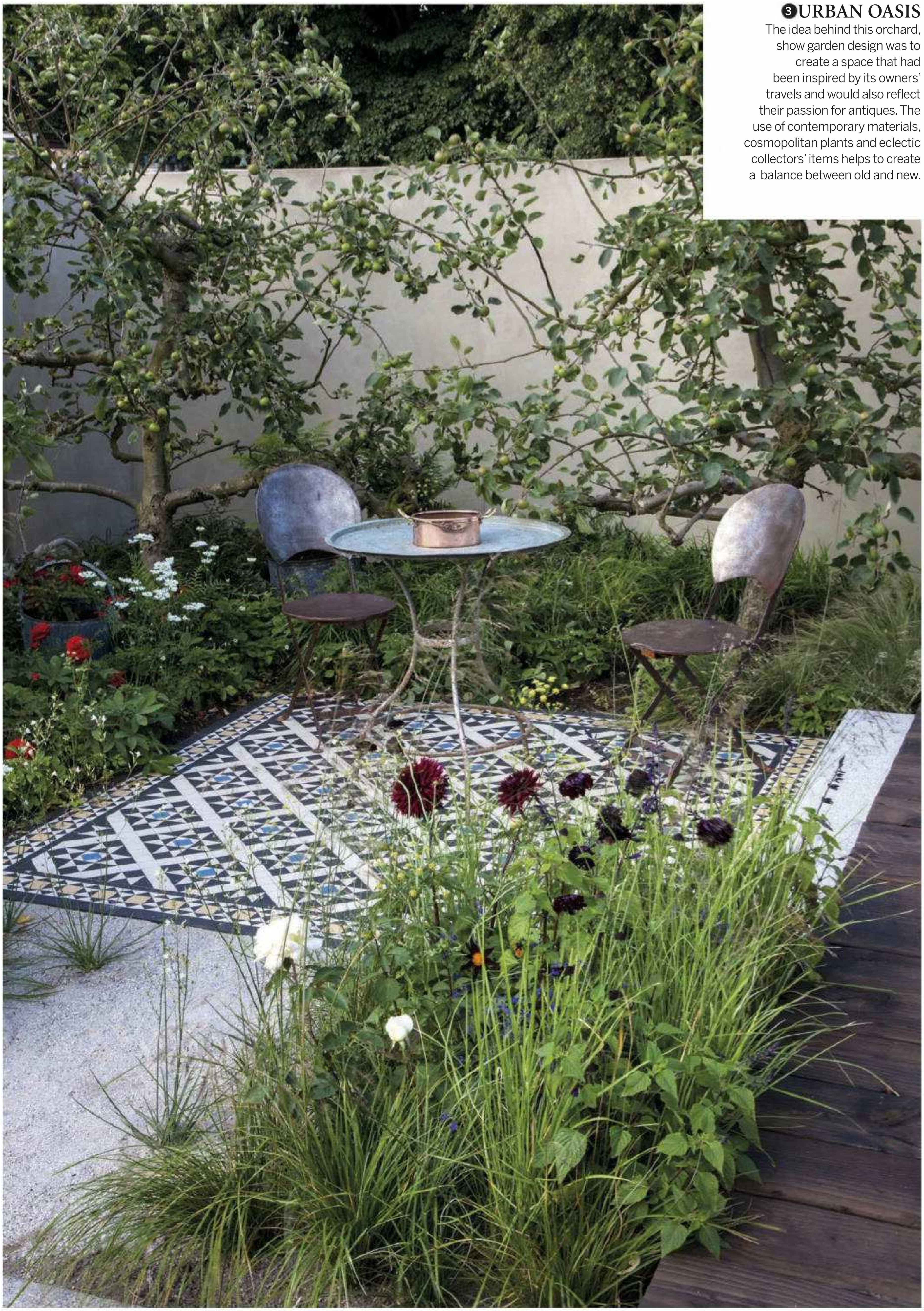

③URBAN OASIS

The idea behind this orchard, show garden design was to create a space that had been inspired by its owners' travels and would also reflect their passion for antiques. The use of contemporary materials, cosmopolitan plants and eclectic collectors' items helps to create a balance between old and new.

3 THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP / LIZ EDDISON. THE STYLE AND DESIGN GARDEN, RHS HAMPTON COURT FLOWER SHOW 2018 / DESIGN: ULA MARIA

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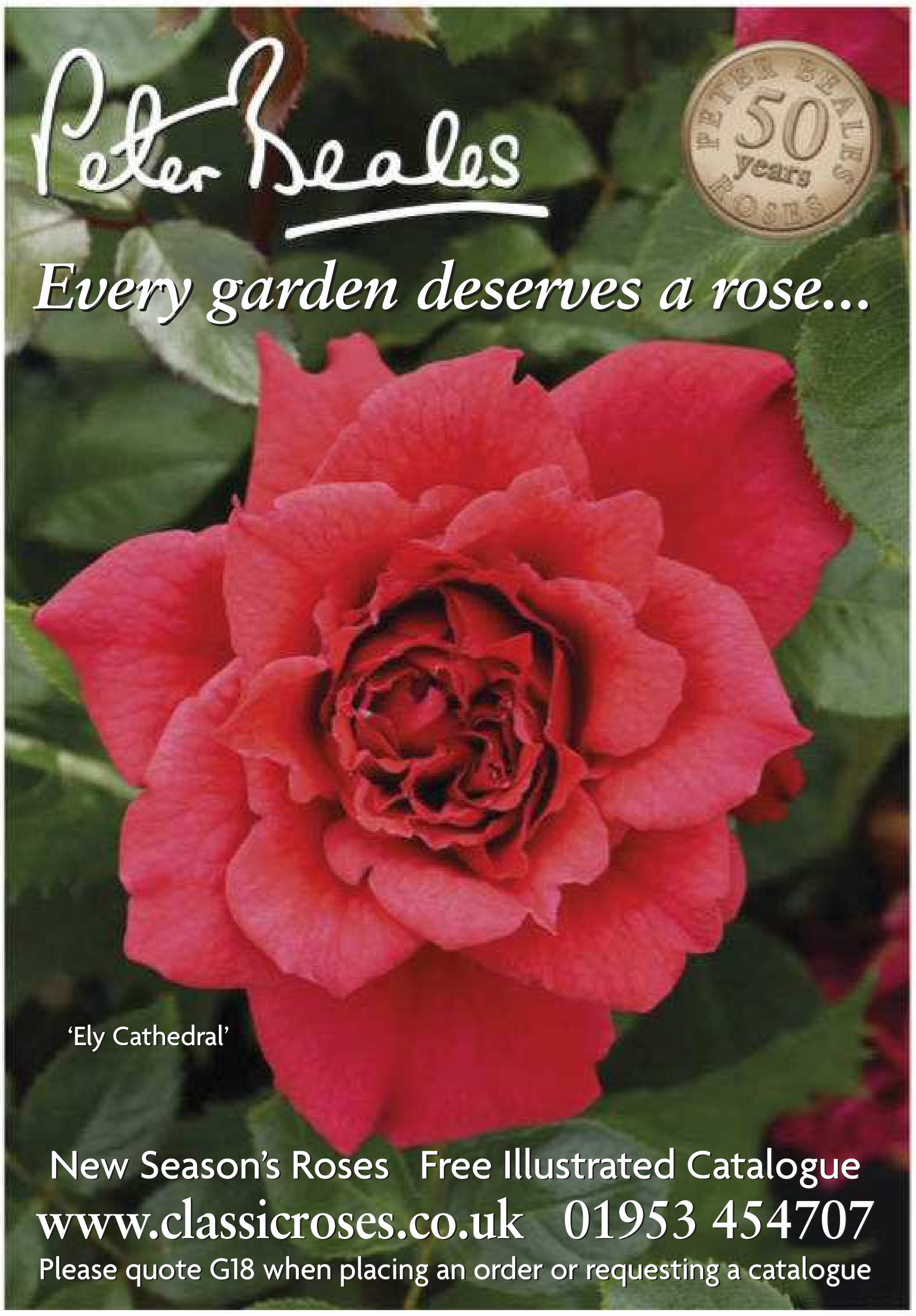

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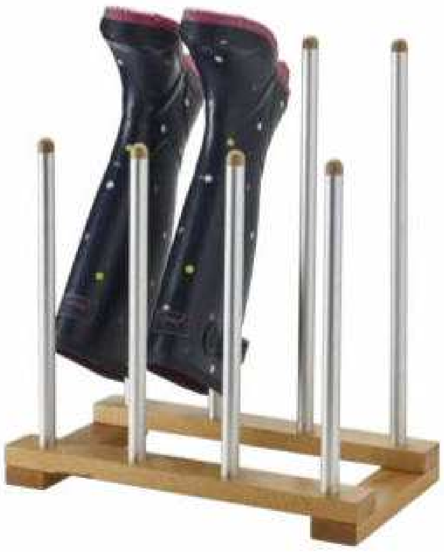

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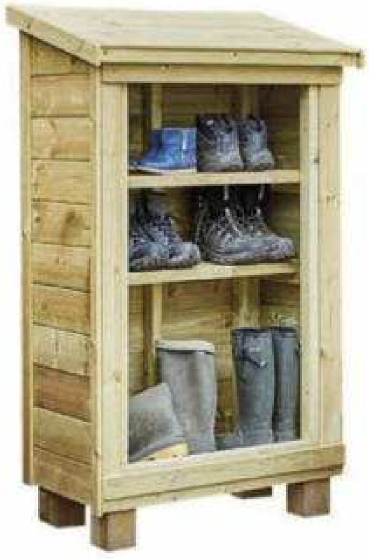

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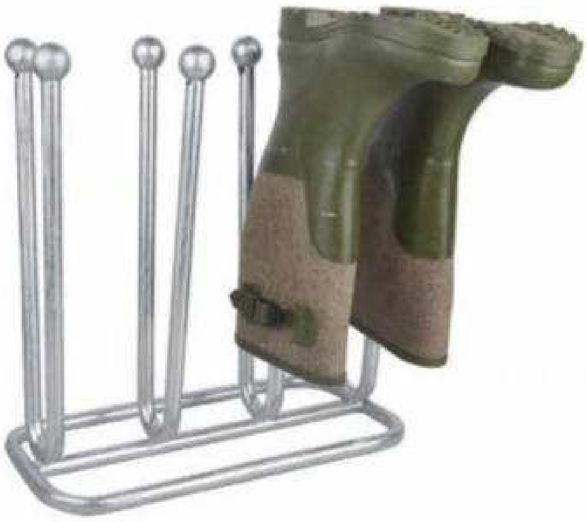

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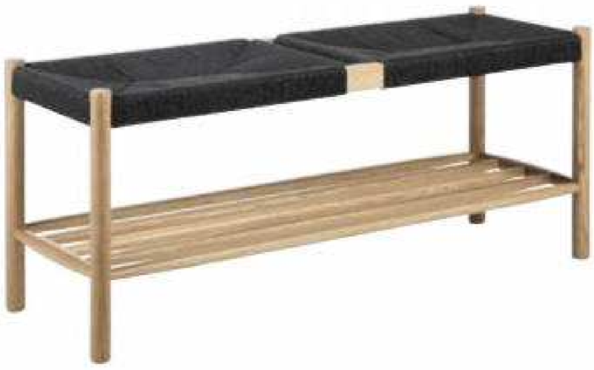

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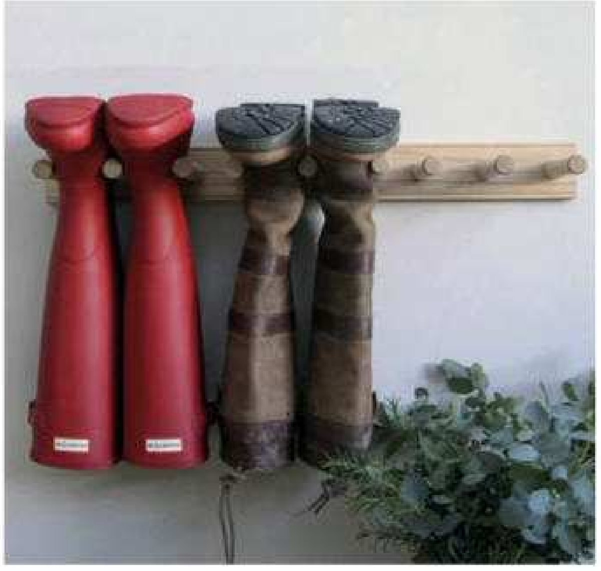

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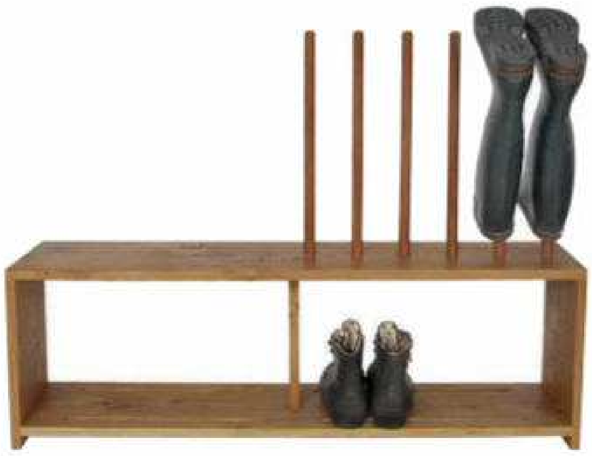

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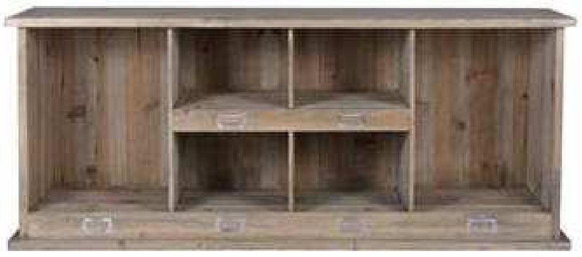

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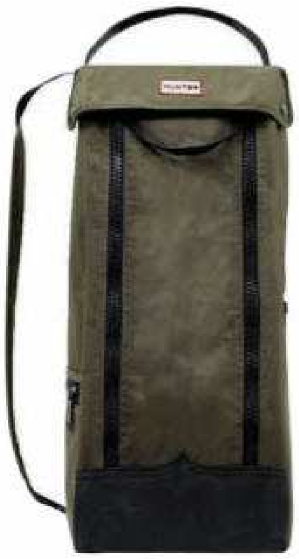

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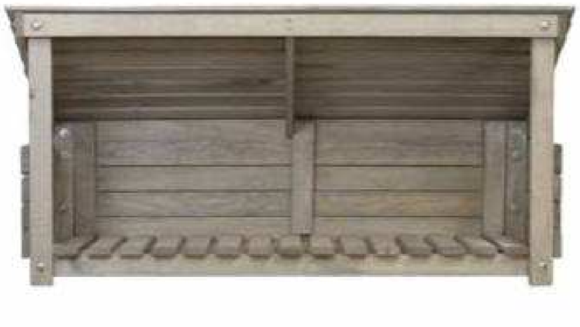

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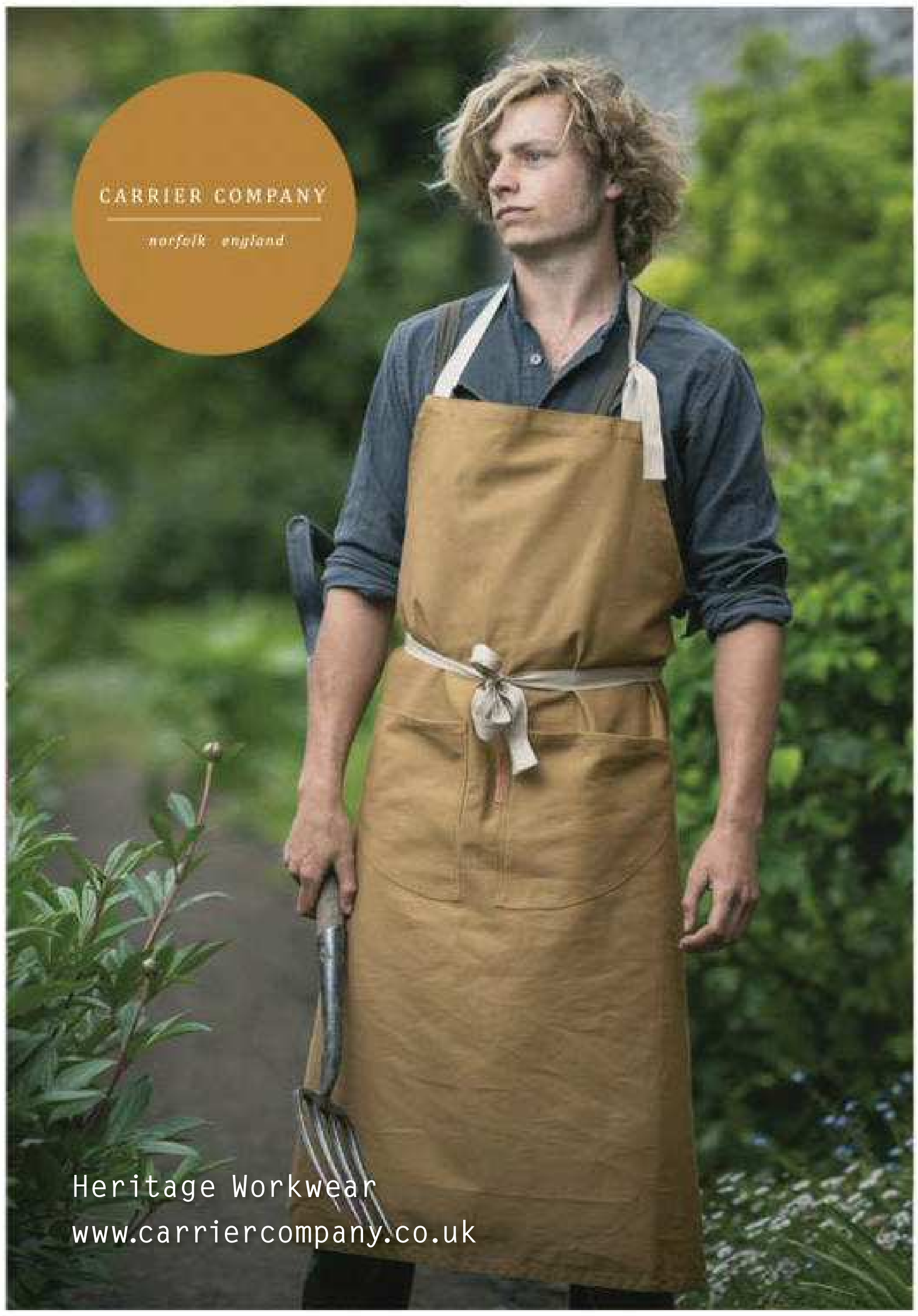

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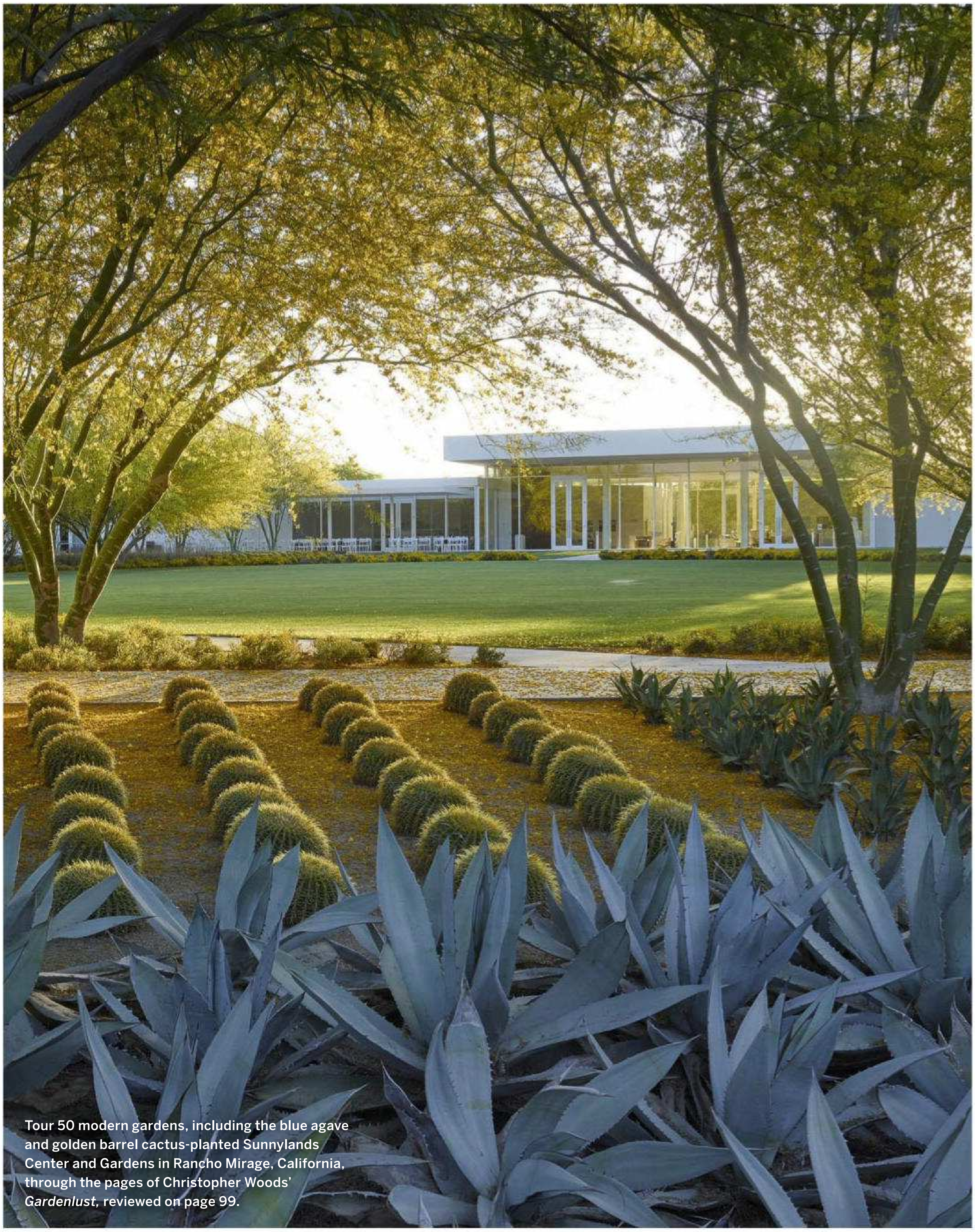

Tour 50 modern gardens, including the blue agave and golden barrel cactus-planted Sunnylands Center and Gardens in Rancho Mirage, California, through the pages of Christopher Woods' *Gardenlust*, reviewed on page 99.

MARION BRENNER

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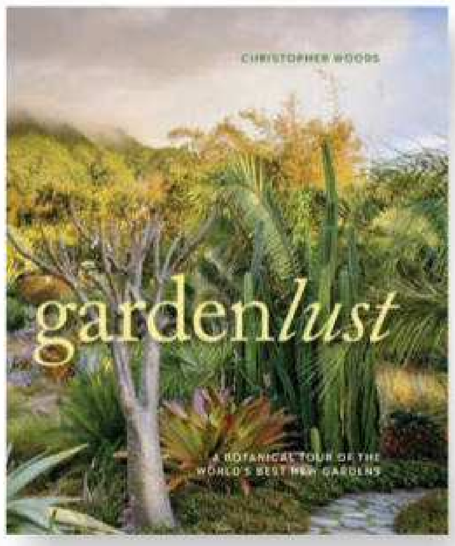
BOOK REVIEWS



GARDENLUST

by Christopher Woods

Timber Press, £29.99
ISBN 978-1604697971

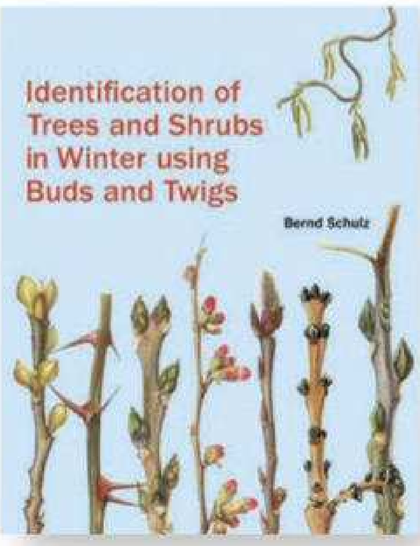
An extraordinary collection of 21st-century gardens that will arouse the wanderlust in anyone keen on contemporary landscape design.

Reviewer Annie Guilfoyle is a garden designer and writer.

Even before turning the very first page, I knew this book would be filled with the most extraordinary gardens – for the simple reason that author Christopher Woods was the chief designer and director of Chanticleer in the USA for 20 years. It is one of my favourite gardens, so I knew the horticultural bar was set very high. Woods describes himself as 'a restless man at heart' and declares, 'I continue to fall in love with this extraordinary world and its botanical marvels'.

His mission was to travel across six continents with a self-imposed brief to discover the best and most innovative gardens conceived and created within the past 20 years. His selection covers 50 designs, ranging from vast public parks and corporate landscapes to small private gardens. Woods' criteria are beauty, nature, plants and people. He tells us 'No garden touches on just one – most have all of them'. He recognises that one of the strongest trends in modern garden design is the use of native plants, a theme in many of his chosen gardens. However, his eclectic selection also includes gardens such as the innovative Federal Twist in New Jersey, created by self-taught gardener James Golden. American native plants intermingle with European and Asian plants, resulting in what Woods describes as a garden of 'golden gorgeoisty'.

It would be hard to pick out the star turns from this line-up of brilliant botanical hot spots as they are all so inspiring; and it is also extremely encouraging to see where 21st-century landscape design is heading. The quality of the photography in this book is exquisite, and the images are plentiful. Whether you are a garden globetrotter or an armchair explorer, this book is definitely one to add to your collection.


Identification of Trees and Shrubs in Winter using Buds and Twigs
Bernd Schulz

IDENTIFICATION OF TREES AND SHRUBS IN WINTER USING BUDS AND TWIGS

by Bernd Schulz

Kew Publishing, £45
ISBN 978-1842466506

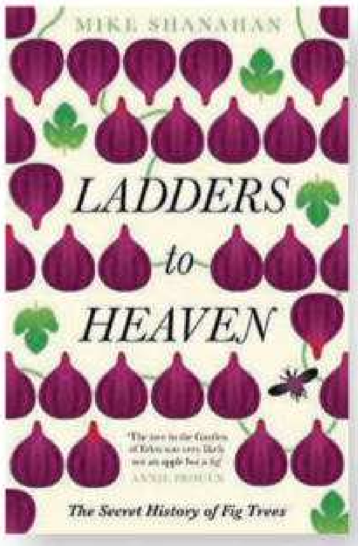
A comprehensive and indispensable illustrated guide to identifying deciduous species out of season written by a botanical expert.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

There is so much to admire in this great work of botany and botanical illustration. As Tony Kirkham explains in his foreword to the English edition, botanical art illustrates the morphological features of a plant with so much more clarity than a photograph; and Schulz's drawings, compiled over a lifetime, are indispensable to the book. They alone would justify its purchase, but here they serve to enhance the book's greater overall purpose.

The author's thesis is that reasonably easy-to-distinguish features of winter twigs, such as the disposition of buds and leaf scars, are a chronically underutilised resource in the science of plant systematics. He proves it by publishing his key to all of the relevant genera, which can be followed, twig in hand, to identify practically any woody, deciduous plant growing in temperate regions of the world. Once narrowed down to a particular genus, the body of the book features keys that divide all relevant families into genera and subgenera, the species of which are described and illustrated individually. This section of the book contains most of the author's botanical illustrations and is arranged in botanical order, and is easy to cross-reference with the alphabetical index of both botanical and English names.

The winter twig identification test has long been a staple of botany courses, but until now the absence of leaves, flowers and fruit has been considered a major obstacle to distinguishing woody plants. This book proves the opposite to be true: stripped of ephemeral elements, the essential architecture of woody plants can be a straightforward and valuable means of plant identification.



LADDERS TO HEAVEN: THE SECRET HISTORY OF FIG TREES

by Mike Shanahan

Unbound, £8.99
ISBN 978-1783525805

A concise and accessible book interspersed with colourful and illuminating stories on the history of fig trees.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer.

Prepare to have your eyebrows raised as you turn the pages of this book. Never again will you look at a fig tree in the same way after reading the writings of Mike Shanahan, a writer and illustrator with a doctorate in rainforest ecology, who weaves together research with the mythology, history and ecology of this intriguing plant.

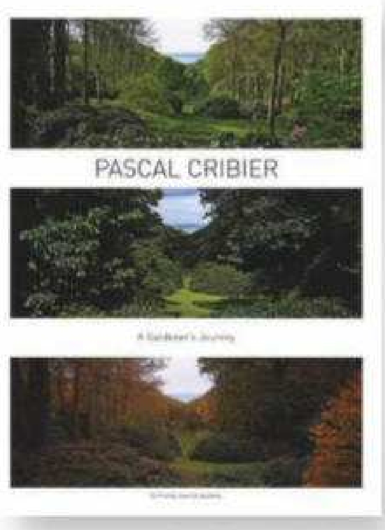
From the house plant *Ficus benjamina* to strangler figs festooned over the ruins of ancient Cambodian temples, Shanahan introduces us to the diverse, surprising and varied ficus species of which there are more than 750.

There are many surprises. That the fig is not a fruit but an inverted flower. That fig trees date back millions of years and survived the dinosaur-killing asteroid. That some figs are smaller than a pea, others as big as a tennis ball.

Shanahan's colourful stories take you on a journey around the world. The characters include naturalists and explorers, countless fig biologists, and animals such as rhinoceros hornbills. But the key protagonists are the wasps that pollinate the trees and on whose vital partnership the fates of thousands of other species hangs.

The book is dense with facts – at times it's like clambering through a tangle of jungle creepers – but you are rewarded for your endurance. Shanahan also simplifies some of the science and makes it engaging and accessible for non-scientific readers.

Small black-and-white illustrations occasionally interrupt the text but there is no need for photographs as Shanahan conjures up the images with his writing. While the book has a serious message about the impact of deforestation and climate change, it ends on a positive note, looking at the great potential of this powerful plant.



A GARDENER'S JOURNEY

by Pascal Cribier

Editions Xavier Barral, £59
ISBN 978-2365111683

A beautifully laid out anthology of Pascal Cribier's work, with plenty to contribute to the world of garden and landscape design.

Reviewer Emily Erlam is a garden designer.

I picked this book up in Paris a few years ago, taken by the breadth of work and the multitude of different photography that carefully illustrate projects through the seasons. The images are shot and laid out in an attempt to be immersive, allowing you to 'take a stroll' through the gardens. Recently published in English, it is a delight to read the somewhat poetic and philosophical text that intersects the visuals. It has been superbly translated. But the true joy of this book is in the works themselves, which are varied and innovative; ranging from his classical renovation of the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris, to the minimalist contemporary garden at Donjon de Vez.

Pascal, who died in 2015, preferred to call himself a gardener, and with good reason; his understanding of nature is evident in his designs, particularly his appreciation of how to work with drought, water and wind. He approached each project with new vision, so his work is difficult to delineate to a style but he draws on themes of classicism and minimalism, sometimes verging on conceptual, and always with a deep respect for the natural environment of the sites.

Do buy this book if you are looking for something different. His projects are varied and not everyone will like all of them, but it is likely they will inspire. This book makes the reader think about gardens in a different way, perhaps a little less sedate and less comfortable. There are also many images to enjoy; favourites are his own house in Normandy, where he created sculptural earthworks that form waterways for the waterlogged soil to drain, and in contrast, his fabulous dry planting in the punishing terrain of Château Le Plaisir.

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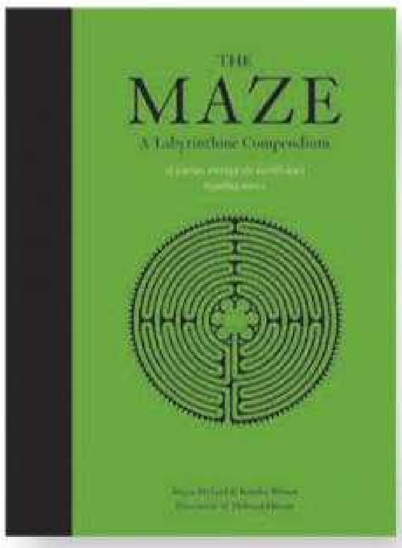


THE MAZE: A LABYRINTHINE COMPENDIUM
by Angus Hyland
and Kendra Wilson
Illustrations by Thibaud Hérem

Laurence King Publishing,
£24.99
ISBN 978-1786273222

Prepare to get lost in the world of labyrinth and maze-making in this attractively packaged book that looks at the history of mazes.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden writer and critic.

What is it about mazes? The challenge is physical, intellectual and – as this book shows – spiritual, too. There is also the merest frisson of danger about mazes: what will happen if we can't find a way out? At least one of the 60 mazes detailed here contains signboards that can be raised above hedge level so that the 'terminally' lost can be rescued. The maze or labyrinth is a richly metaphorical subject, too, though this is not the book for those who wish to take those turnings.

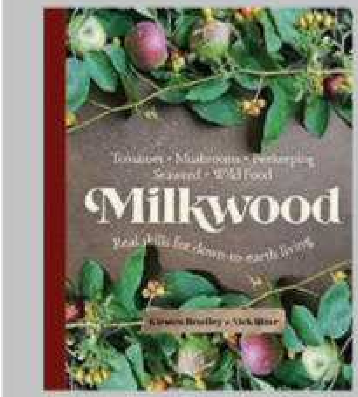
At the heart of this design-led compendium are 60 diagrammatic plan illustrations of mazes. In one sense they are solvable puzzles, though I doubt many readers will approach the topic in that spirit. The fascination lies instead in the variety among mazes and their cultural identities, from celebrated medieval examples, such as the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, ancient mazes, such as the 'possibly Bronze Age' rock and turf maze at Lindbacke in Sweden, to the monumental vertical maze created up the side of a Dubai skyscraper in 2012. This last is a striking modern example, though there are perhaps too many that have been created in the past half-century, some little more than gimmicky visitor attractions.

An interesting sub-category is the maze in fiction, that of the Overlook Hotel in Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining*, and by a fictional maze made real in Venice in 2011, in homage to a Jorge Luis Borges short story.

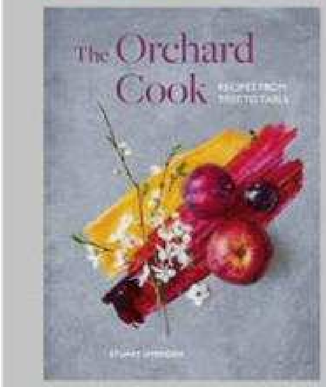
The text speculates as to whether historic mazes were places for dance and merriment as opposed to sombre pilgrimage. It's a shame, therefore, that the book remains essentially diagrammatic, in that nowhere is the actual experience of being in any of these mazes described, let alone that of getting lost.

Other books

Find ways to celebrate the seasons and suggestions for creative projects in this latest selection of new titles.



MILKWOOD: REAL SKILLS FOR DOWN-TO-EARTH LIVING
by Kirsten Bradley & Nick Ritar
Murdoch Books, £25
ISBN 978-1743365106
A how-to book focused on five different ways to connect with nature including growing tomatoes and beekeeping.



THE ORCHARD COOK: RECIPES FROM TREE TO TABLE
by Stuart Ovenden
Clearview, £25
ISBN 978-1908337467
Eighty recipes to transform orchard fruits into delicious dishes and drinks.

THE
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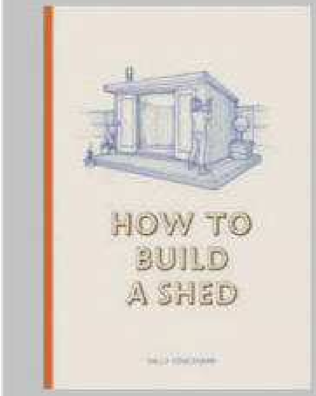
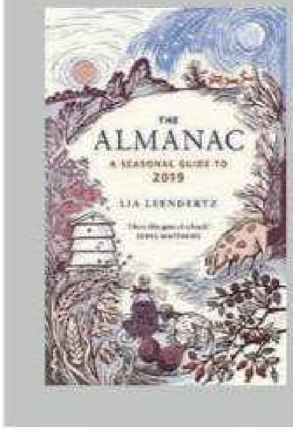
THE FLOWER EXPERT: IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FOR A LIFE WITH FLOWERS
by Fleur McHarg
Thames & Hudson, £24.95
ISBN 978-0500501245
A book dedicated to the beauty of flowers with lots of creative ideas for floral arrangements.



HOW TO BUILD A SHED
by Sally Coulthard
Laurence King Publishing, £14.99
ISBN 978-1786272829
A complete practical guide to building your own shed with step-by-step instructions and and useful labelled diagrams.



THE ALMANAC: A SEASONAL GUIDE TO 2019
by Lia Leendertz
Mitchell Beazley, £10
ISBN 978-1784725150
Updated for 2019 with more lovely ideas to celebrate the seasons, month-by-month.

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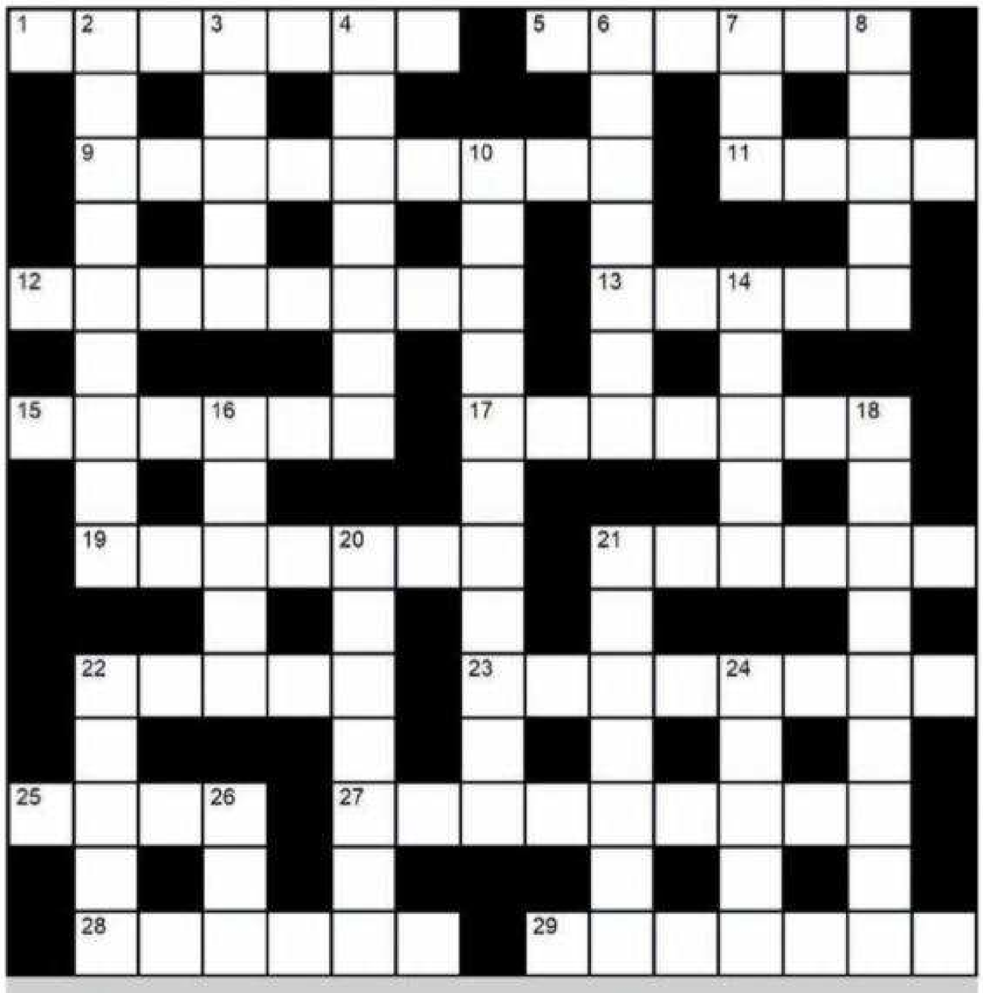
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Blue-flowering alpine plant producing antigen (7)
5 Term for eg garlic's first green shoots – in cress cap, especially (6)
9 Runner bean genus – so help us, a mess! (9)
11 Pink tulip with ruffled flowers named after a French couturier (4)
12 Lilian half enters corny common name for *Ixia* plant (4,4)
13 Studies, it's said, plants in *Poaceae* or *Phragmites* family (5)
15 Some label I annotated 'Genus of a honeysuckle relative' (6)
17 Come, one needs to change genus of a poppy relative (7)
19 Endless tropical sort of fruit in *Prunus* genus (7)
21 Genus of ivy… in shed, er, almost (6)
22 Naive environmentalist? (5)
23 Ruddy Old Nick's crimson, juicy, apple! (3,5)
25 A lot of cash for plant containers (4)
27 Blue-flowering shrub, aka Californian lilac, aunt chose to move (9)
28 Common name for *Nyssa sylvatica* – Leo put differently (6)
29 Lancaster's flower – or reeds, perhaps (3,4)

DOWN

2 Genus of spurge plants has Barnsdale's leader in feeling of elation! (9)
3 See 22 down
4 A white, red-striped, sweet pea – 'discovered' by Columbus? (7)
6 Fragrant American shrub, aka jessamine, in nicest *Rumex* (7)
7 Poppyseed container (3)
8 Blackthorn fruits less diverse around start of October (5)
10 Eyes article about genus of plants in honeysuckle family (11)
14 Single-flowering, red fuchsia – a role for Charlton Heston (2,3)
16 Sizeable part of poplar genus (5)
18 Genus of jonquil (9)
20 Usual shape of strawberry fruits – almost funny! (7)
21 A named lavender and National Trust garden in Gloucestershire (7)
22/3 A purple-black bearded iris – provides funfair entertainment (5,5)
24 National Trust's Claremont Landscape Garden location – sheer rocky (5)
26 It's what aphids feed on, chump! (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SOLUTIONS TO SEPTEMBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Wallflower **7** Pods **9** Stigma **10** In season **11** Wren **12** Teeth **13** Lush **15** Halesia **17** Pieris **19** Angola **21** Concord **23** Emma **25** Comet **26** Peel **27** Fusilier **29** Aspera **30** Moss **31** Gayfeather.
DOWN 2 Antirrhinum **3** Logan **4** Lean-tos **5** Weigela **6** Rosehip **7** Pearl **8** Duo **14** Spindle tree **16** Leo **18** Edo **20** Arching **21** Comfrey **22** Nut case **24** Abies **26** Pipit **28** UFO.

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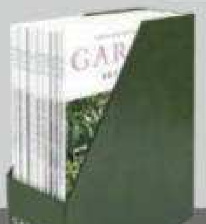

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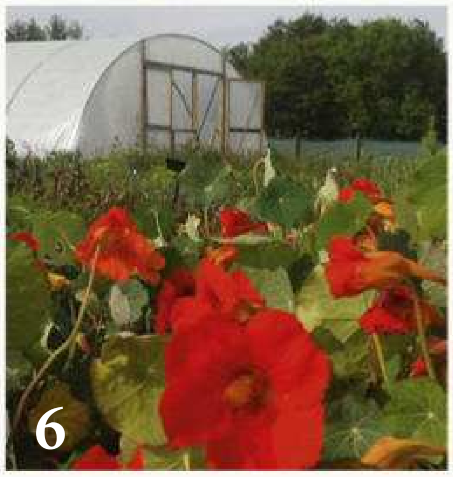

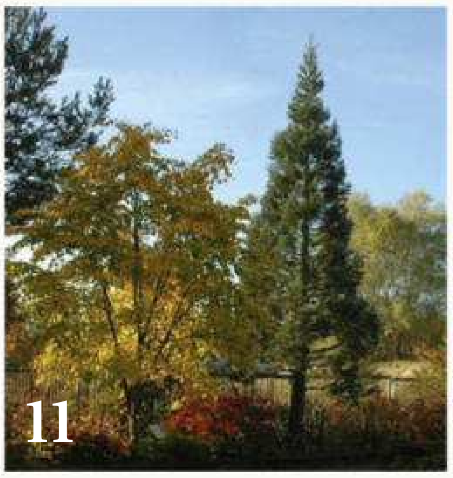

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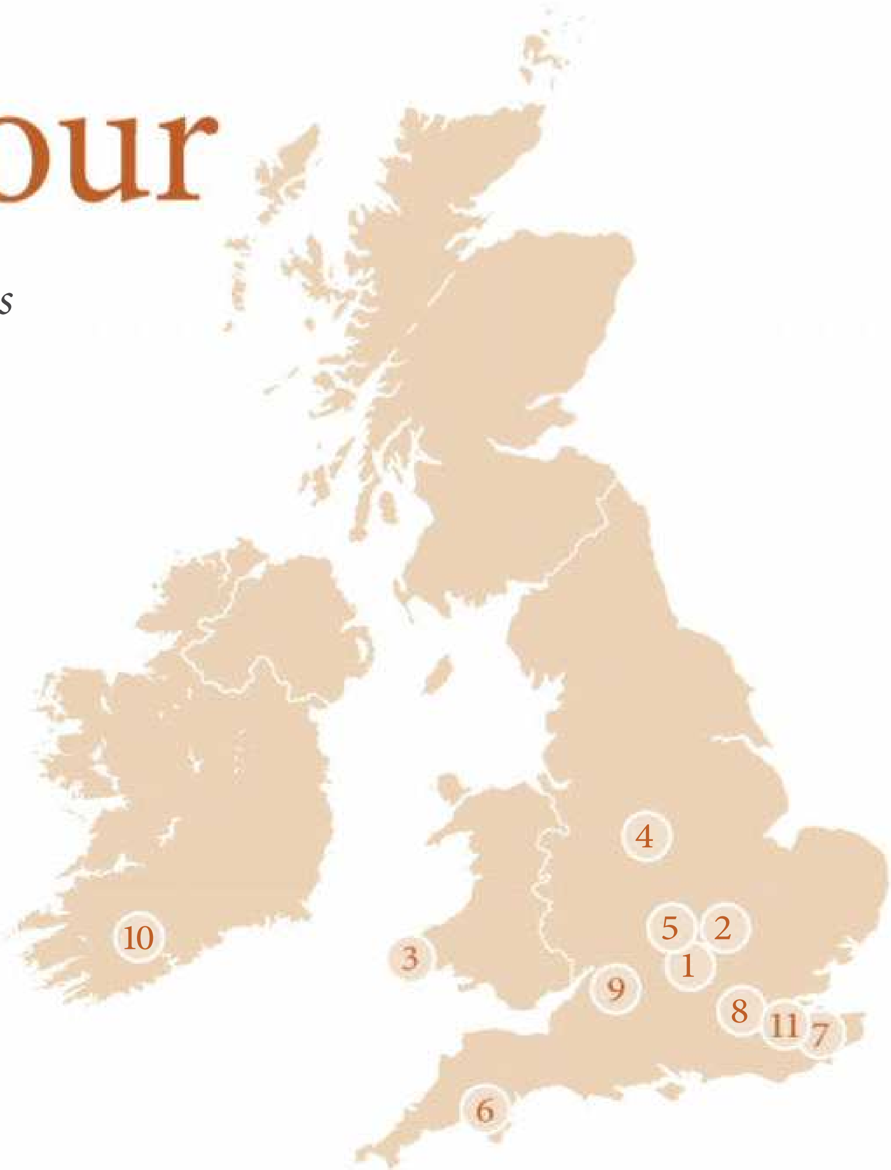

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Visit these award-winning gardens as they erupt in an array of stunning autumn colours. There's autumn interest throughout the parkland and gardens but the Bog Garden steals the show. Take in many features designed by the great Landscape Designer Humphry Repton. Open daily until 28 October.

Woburn, Bedfordshire, MK17 9WA | 01525 290333 | woburnabbey.co.uk

3 PICTON CASTLE & GARDENS

Explore the 13th Century Castle's rich history, discover Wales' largest collection of owls and enjoy the magnificent rhododendrons, shady woodlands, exotic jungle garden and colourful walled garden alongside living willow dens, family trails and an engaging adventure playground. A garden for all seasons.

Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 4AS | 01437 751 326 | pictoncastle.co.uk

4 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb autumn colour! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com

5 HARCOURT ARBORETUM

Visit Harcourt Arboretum this autumn to see a blaze of spectacular acer leaves. Part of Oxford University and 20 minutes drive from the historic city centre, the Arboretum contains some of the oldest and most impressive redwoods in the UK, set within 130 acres of historic picturesque landscape.

Nuneham Courtenay OX44 9PX | 01865 610305 | www.obga.ox.ac.uk

6 LUKESLAND GARDENS

Family-run Lukesland Gardens on Dartmoor opens its 25 acres of glorious autumn colour on Sundays and Wednesdays 7/10 11/11/2018. Wonderful reflections of autumn tints in the pools of the Addicombe Brook. Home-made soup and cakes in the tearoom.

Harford, Ivybridge, South Devon PL21 0JF | 01752 691 749 | lukesland.co.uk

7 HOLE PARK ESTATE

A less well known Autumn gem is Hole Park, located in a beautiful setting in the Weald of Kent. The garden has been developed by four generations of the Barham family & the Autumn colours there are simply special. The homemade cakes and cream teas are worth a detour too!

Rolvenden, Kent TN17 4JA | 01580 241 344 | holepark.com

8 OSTERLEY PARK AND HOUSE

Osterley Park and House is one of the last surviving country estates in London, with the restored 18th-century gardens taking on their glorious autumnal hues. Don't miss the vibrant colours of the ornamental vegetable garden, set within the beautiful Tudor walled garden.

Isleworth, London TW7 4RB | 020 8232 5050 | nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley

9 CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

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chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

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Blarney, Cork, Ireland | +353 21 438 5252 | blarneycastle.ie

11 LEEDS CASTLE

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Nr Maidstone, Kent ME17 1RG | leeds-castle.com

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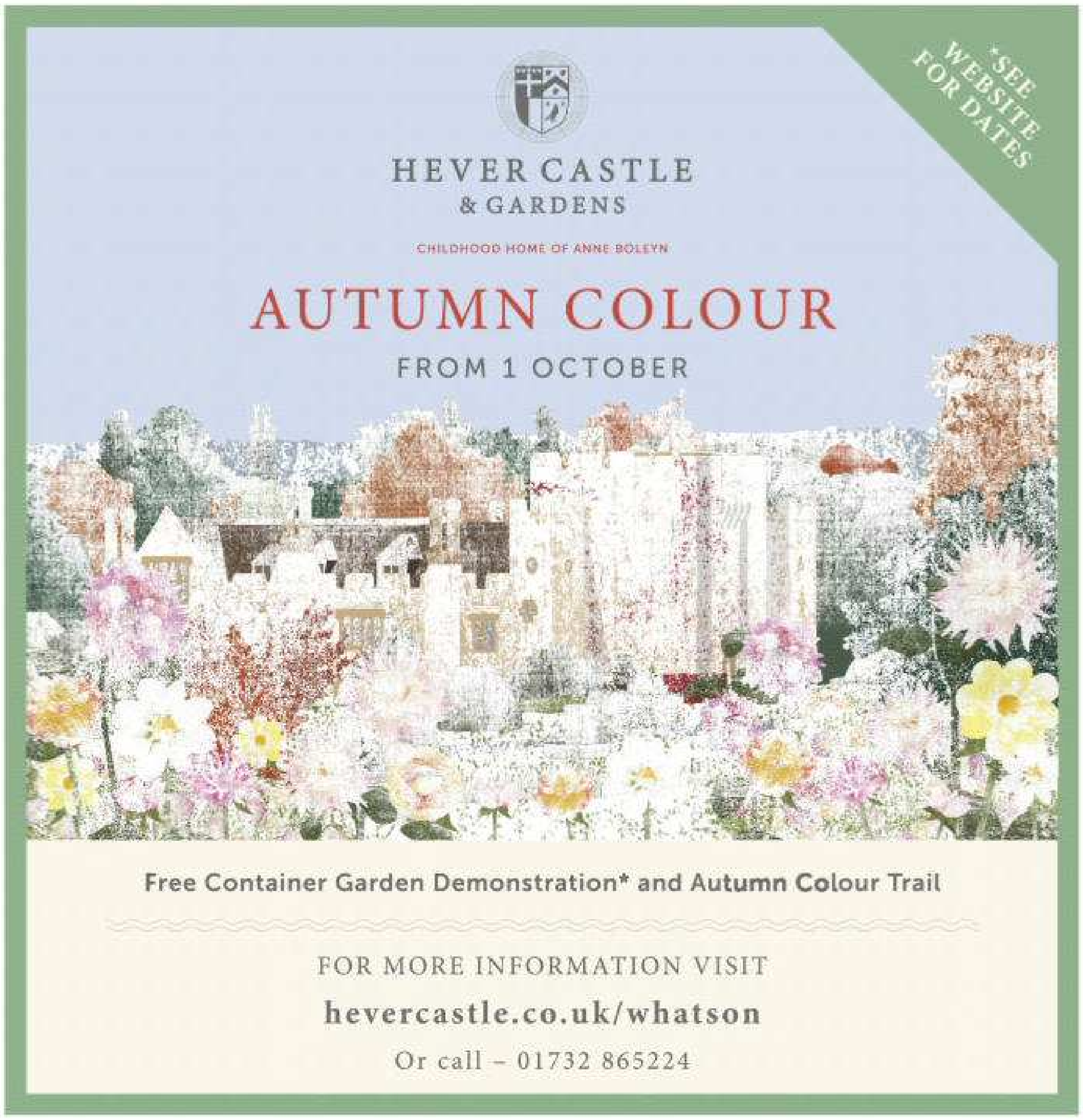

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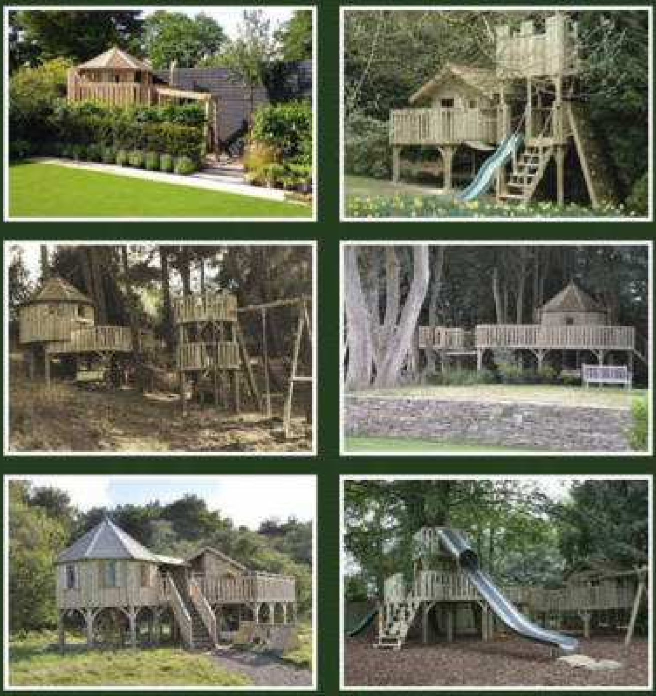

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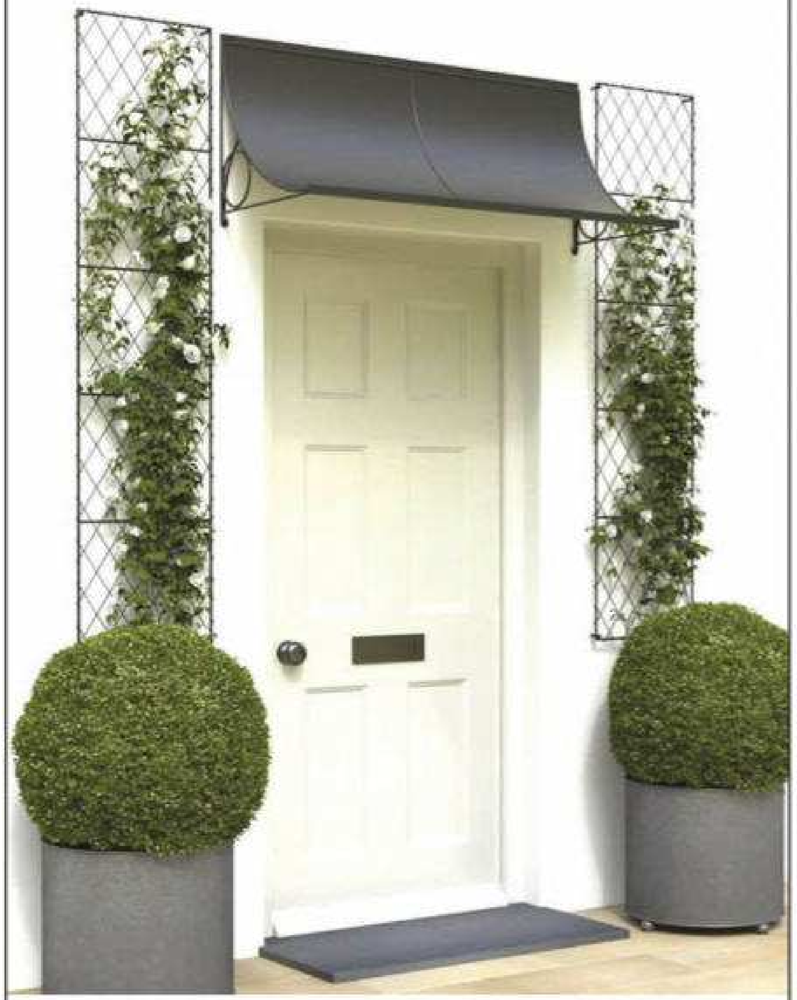

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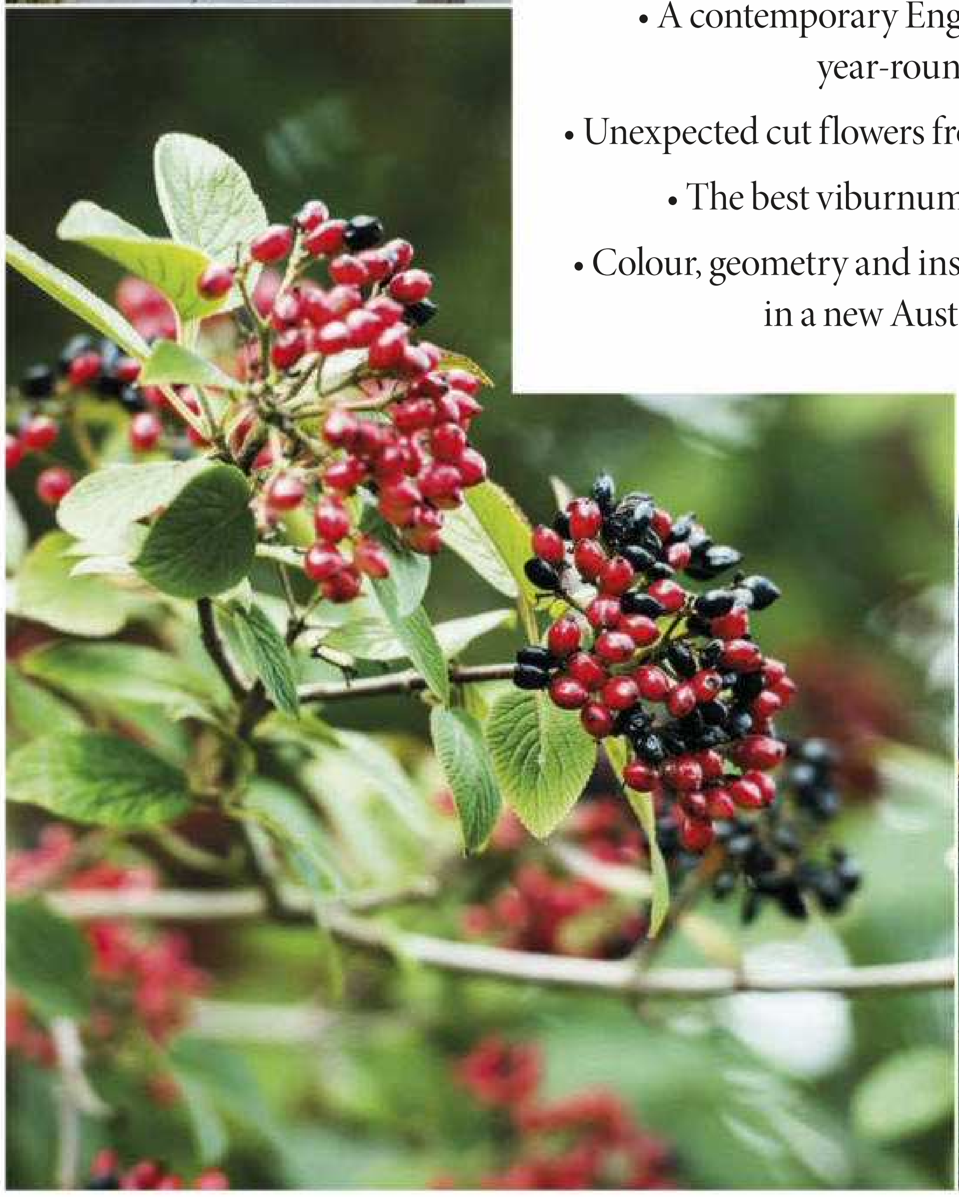
- The best viburnum for autumn berries
- Colour, geometry and inspiring plant combinations in a new Australian garden



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WRITER'S PLOT

TRIUMPH OF HOPE

Frank is having sleepless nights planning next spring's tulip display. He's hoping for a fabulous spectacle, but will his future be fringed or lily-flowered?

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **SANAE SUGIMOTO**

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO MIMIC TULIPS FROM A DUTCH EXAMPLE

And now it is time to begin, yet again, with tulips. At the moment of writing the order has not yet been made and I am beginning to lose sleep over it. You would think, with all these refreshed borders to work in, that the world was my oyster. But I have been here before and the dilemma now is whether to blow the housekeeping on a spectacle that I know will flourish for a year and barely do for another, or kid myself into thinking that I am investing a similar amount with long-term gains in mind.

There are tulips that have withstood more than a decade in this wet, unripening clay, most outstanding of which is one called 'Negrita.' It is a good solid purple from the Triumph group, robust and long lasting in flowering as well as in perennial endurance. So good and so dependable that I am considering getting huge quantities of it and planting it everywhere, making it a kind of leitmotif of the tulip season against which the ephemerals can come and go.

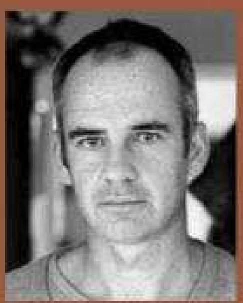
'Negrita' looks best against a red, I think, but have yet to find a red with the same stamina. 'Île de France' is one of the best reds, and I once got it in an attempt at copying Laura Gatacre's combination with *Exochorda* x *macrantha* 'The Bride' at de Wiersse, but it not only failed to flower at the same time here, but failed to exist at all in subsequent years. I should have known better than to mimic tulips from a Dutch example, but sometimes you see a simple combination that blows your mind and you can't help yourself. 'The Bride' has continued alone, seeming happy enough to flower in the lurch, but I haven't yet given up on finding her a suitable spouse, which will also be the thing to fool around with 'Negrita.'

I've got my eye on a lily-flowered tulip called 'Pieter de Leur', which I've only seen in photographs so there's no telling how good the colour might be. In general the lily-flowered do well here, apart from 'Red Shine' who took to his heels without a backward glance. 'White Triumphator' on the other hand, goes on forever, becoming less remarkable every year, while 'Marilyn' is equally consistent but more perennially amusing with her cheeky pink stripe. The lily-flowered, flowering later, have competition for attention, unlike early tulips, which can have all the astonishment to themselves.

I used to look down my nose at the Fringes until I discovered 'Flamenco', which is a solid yellow with a red flame and a fringe that looks natural rather than something done by a maniac who shouldn't have been trusted with scissors. It has persisted confoundingly well in a shady overcrowded bed and now that I want more I find it has been dropped by all the affordable bulb houses. I'll either have to dig deep or call in favours from the Netherlands.

It is maddening that tulips won't increase in our gardens the way they will for the growers, and I asked a Dutch friend once what the secret was. She replied, without a trace of embarrassment – "Because we are so mean, we never throw anything away." Then it was obvious: if you are prepared to sift through your (sandy) soil and rescue every bulblet the size of a newborn's fingernail and grow it on carefully for year after year, then you can make a decent living by selling to the likes of me, for whom typing in the card number and kneeling in the wet November clay is trouble enough.

Now my fingers are itching to make the orders. I know I'll start with the sensible, trusted and tested ones, and then realise that just a few more gets me beyond the threshold for free postage, which is soon followed by a chaos of desire and optimism. I somehow feel that next year we are in for one of those springs that are very tulipy.



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire.

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